

Japan's Prince Sayako turns 20

TOKYO (AP) — Princess Sayako, the only daughter of Japan's Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, turned 20 Tuesday. And, the young princess is expected to marry within the next few years.

Winnie Mandela enters hospital

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Winnie Mandela, the anti-apartheid activist, was admitted to a private hospital here Tuesday, a day after being released from prison. She is being treated for a heart condition.

Italy's bleeding Madonna freed from custody

CIVITAVECCHIA (AP) — A 30-year-old Italian woman, known as Madonna, was freed from custody Tuesday after being held for several days. She was accused of being involved in a car accident.

N. Zealand police hunt man who threw baby from car

WELLINGTON (AP) — New Zealand police are hunting for a man who is accused of throwing a baby from a car. The incident occurred in a public place.

2 tourists saved after diving accident

AOABA (Petra) — A Royal Medical Services (RMS) team on Friday managed to save the lives of two tourists involved in a diving accident while diving in the Akaba Gulf. RMS Director Major-General Youssef Al Qusous sent a medical team from Al Hussein Medical Centre to operate on the two tourists who had air clots in the brain and the spinal marrow at the Princess Haya hospital in the city of Aqaba. The identity of the two tourists was not immediately known. One of them, an Austrian, suffered paralysis of the lower limbs as a result of a clot in the spinal marrow. The other, identified only as a female American tourist, was paralysed in the upper and lower limbs as a result of clots in the brain and the spinal marrow. The hospital said the two have fully recovered after the operations and were discharged from the hospital, which has specialised equipment and team to treat injuries sustained by divers. The team, which conducted the operation, was led by Brigadier Samir Zureiqat, and included specialists from both the Al Hussein Medical Centre and the hospital.

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Spanish king, queen meet Prince Abdullah

MADRID (Petra) — King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia of Spain on Thursday met Prince Abdullah and Princess Rania who are currently visiting Spain. The king and queen of Spain hosted a dinner in honour of Prince Abdullah and Princess Rania. Prince Abdullah on Friday was received by the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff of the Spanish army and the two discussed issues of common interest.

Kabariti, Sharaa discuss relations

NEW YORK (Petra) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti on Thursday met in New York with his Syrian counterpart Farouk Al Sharaa on the sidelines of a conference on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) held at the United Nations. Mr. Kabariti and Mr. Sharaa discussed Jordanian-Syrian relations, the two countries' stand on renewing the NPT and issues listed on the agenda of the Non-Aligned Movement conference which will be held in Indonesia April 25.

India test-fires Akash missile

NEW DELHI (R) — India successfully test-fired its surface-to-air medium-range missile Akash on Friday from its test range in the eastern state of Orissa, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said. This was the seventh test fire of the locally developed missile, the news agency said quoting a Defence Ministry spokesman. "The flight trial was fully successful and met the mission requirement set for the trial," the spokesman told PTI.

Japanese split over role in Golan

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese cabinet ministers remained sharply divided Friday over whether the country will send troops to take part in U.N. peacekeeping operations in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama said he would make a final decision by the end of May after a meeting failed to produce a compromise. "I want to make a decision after consulting officials," Mr. Murayama said. During the meeting, Trade Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said "we have to take a positive stance" toward sending troops, according to officials who attended.

Israeli fire at Lebanese fishermen

TYRE (AFP) — Israeli navy patrol boats forced Lebanese fishermen to abandon their nets and return to port after opening fire on their boats on Friday, port officials here said. Three launches strafed with machine-gun fire although they were less than two kilometres from shore, the limit imposed on the fishermen by the Israeli navy since Feb. 8, they said.

Islamists protest at Saudi embassy

LONDON (AFP) — Some 400 persons representing the Islamic fundamentalist group Hezb Al Tahrir demonstrated in front of the Saudi embassy here Friday against what they called ruling "traitors" in the Muslim World. They chanted "down with the ruling regime" and "Minister Benazir Bhutto, the ruling family of Saudi Arabia and Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, and called for "the return of Islamic law." The Saudi embassy issued a statement saying Hezb Al Tahrir "condemns all present Muslim governments illegitimate ... and as resorted to violence in many countries."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية غير حزبية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

U.S. protests Saudi refusal to cooperate

WASHINGTON (AP) — Saudi Arabia failed to cooperate with the United States in an attempt to seize a prime suspect, secretary of State Warren Christopher said Friday. He told reporters the United States had filed a diplomatic protest. "We expressed our concern that we had not had the cooperation we hoped to have," Mr. Christopher said. The man the United States had hoped to arrest had been hunted for a decade for his reported role in the 1983 car bombing that killed 241 U.S. troops in Lebanon and for a 1985 Trans World Airlines hijacking in which one American died, the Los Angeles Times reported. U.S. agents secretly were sent abroad to prepare to take custody of the suspect, a leader of Hizbollah, on a stopover in Saudi Arabia during an April 7 Middle East Airlines flight headed from Khartoum to Beirut, the newspaper said. Before they could carry out the operation Saudi Arabia decided not to cooperate and refused to allow the plane to land. "It was a fairly short timeframe," Mr. Christopher said, "and we simply did not get the kind of cooperation that we hoped we might have at that particular moment. I can't go beyond that." There was no immediate comment from the Saudi embassy here.

Oklahoma blast toll rises; theories abound

Investigations focus on terrorism from within U.S.; 2 suspects sought



Families of victims of Wednesday's car bombing in Oklahoma City attend a memorial service on Thursday (AFP photo)

Palestinian 'suspect' is freed after questioning

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — A Palestinian-American who was flown back to the United States from London for more questioning about the Oklahoma City bomb blast has been released, the Justice Department said Friday. "He is free to go. He cooperated. There is no reason for him to be held," Justice Department spokesman John Russell said of the man identified by the Jordanian government as Ibrahim Abdullah Hassan Ahmad. Mr. Russell said investigators may want to talk again to Mr. Ahmad, a U.S. citizen from Oklahoma initially described by the Justice Department as a "possible witness" to the blast. But he said investigators had no reason to believe there was any danger Mr. Ahmad would flee the country. "Mr. Russell was unable to say if Mr. Ahmad had any knowledge about the deadly truck bombing of the government office building. It was not clear if U.S. authorities made a mistake in believing he might have some connection to the blast. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) officials said Mr. Ahmad initially was

Suspect held; Michigan Militia house raided

OKLAHOMA CITY (Agencies) — Authorities on Friday arrested one of the two men sought in the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. A law enforcement source said. The man was arrested in Perry, a town of 5,000 about 100 kilometres north of Oklahoma City. A law enforcement official in Washington identified him as Timothy McVeigh. Cable News Network said McVeigh was arrested the night of the bombing on a speeding charge. In Petoskey, Michigan, federal agents raided a house in connection with the car bombing, officials said. The house was presumed to be occupied by one or more members of a paramilitary group known as the Michigan Militia opposed to the federal government, local television said. A spokesman for the militia denied the group was involved in the Oklahoma attack, but they did not rule out participation by a "splitter" group. "We are outraged by this" attack, said Lee Mitrace, acting commander of the Michigan Militia.

King, world leaders condemn bombing

AMMAN (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein has sent a message of sympathy to U.S. President Bill Clinton and condemned the truck bombing in Oklahoma City, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. "It is with deep anger, shock and revulsion that we learnt of the heinous crime committed in Oklahoma City against humanity," the King told Mr. Clinton. "The government and people of Jordan share with me in our sense of outrage over this crime as we condemn terrorism and all criminals who support, abate and perpetuate these ugly and cowardly acts." "Please accept our deepest sympathies and condolences to the American people, the victims and their families," King Hussein said. In Vatican City, Pope John Paul II condemned the car bombing in Oklahoma as a "deplorable act of violence" and expressed his solidarity with victims and their families. "His Holiness Pope John Paul II has been deeply saddened by the deplorable act of violence which has caused so many deaths and injuries in Oklahoma City," the Vatican said in a statement addressed to the archbishop of Oklahoma. "He prays to Almighty God for the victims and invokes divine strength and comfort on the injured and on the families affected by this unspeakable crime," the statement said. German President Roman Herzog condemned the car-bomb attack as a "cowardly act of terrorism" in a telegram to President Clinton. "This cowardly and brutal act is an attack on the state which has the duty to protect the life of citizens in freedom and safety," Mr. Herzog wrote. "We share this goal with our American friends and we remain beside them in these difficult hours," he added. Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev condemned the car bomb blast as "a barbaric act of terrorism," in a message to his U.S. counterpart Warren Christopher. "We have sometimes experienced attempts at destabilisation through terror, assassinations and provocations," said Mr. Kozyrev, quoted by Interfax news agency. Mr. Kozyrev said "resolute measures" were needed to combat "the threat posed now by extremism and organised international crime, which is acquiring a global dimension." Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said he deplored the bomb attack. "Naturally we are against such acts," he told a news conference in the Georgian capital Tbilisi at the end of a visit to the former Soviet republic. "The negative attitude of the United States towards Iran does not give us a basis for being indifferent to such acts." Mr. Rafsanjani, replying to a question from an Iranian journalist, made no further mention of Wednesday's blast. Lebanon's most influential Shiite Muslim cleric condemned the deadly bombing but warned the United States might use the attack as a reason to strike Iran or other Muslim states. "This cowardly and brutal act is an attack on the state

Draft accord on widening self-rule ready — Erakat

JERICHO (Agencies) — Inching towards a final agreement, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) have outlined on paper the autonomy accord that is supposed to be completed by July 1, a top Palestinian negotiator said Friday. "What we have here is the skeleton of what is meant by the interim agreement," said negotiator Saeb Erakat, holding up the draft paper during an interview at his office in this PLO-ruled West Bank town. He said the two sides have agreed on the chapter headings for the pact. The July 1 target date is realistic, despite delays and growing mutual suspicions, Dr. Erakat said. "I think it's doable," he said. But he warned that if the deadline passes without something to show for it, it will spell the end of Israeli-Palestinian peacekeeping. Under the initial September 1993 autonomy accord, Israeli troops were to pull out of West Bank towns by July 1994, on the eve of Palestinian general elections. But Israel balked when militants launched a shooting and bombing campaign that has killed more than 120 Israelis. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said he could not pull out his troops unless PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat did a better job foiling attacks on Israelis. For the past few weeks, separate negotiations have been held on the two key issues: troop redeployment and elections. The redeployment talks have been held in secret locations, apparently to ease

Islamists condemn blast, warn against stereotyping

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian Islamists Friday condemned the Oklahoma car bomb attack but warned against building stereotype image of Muslims as terrorists. Commenting on Wednesday's blast that killed and injured around 300 people, a spokesman for the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party strongly voiced condemnation but warned against attempts to stereotype Arabs and Muslims as terrorists. "Before the truth even came out, the fingers of accusation were pointed at persons with Middle Eastern looks," said Mohammad Owaida, a member of the IAF parliamentary group. Dr. Owaida, who represents the Baqaa camp constituency in the Balqa district, said the IAF was unlikely to issue a formal condemnation of the attack since the largest Islamic party could not be considered as directly concerned or accused of committing such an act. While he strongly criticised the U.S. policies vis-a-vis the Middle East, Dr. Owaida said his party and the Islamists generally do not have anything against the American people themselves and would not engage in such acts. He cast doubts, however, over "Israelis and Zionists," and said they might be involved in the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing. "I would not be surprised if there were some Israeli fingers in this incident," Dr. Owaida said. "It is an American Jewish conspiracy aimed at stereotyping Arabs and Muslims as terrorists... it is part of a campaign launched by (Israeli Prime Minister) Yitzhak Rabin."

Asaad Bayouh Tamimi, head of the Islamic Jihad-Beit Al Maqdes, refused to condemn the blast even though he said it was against the Islamic belief to kill innocent people. "We do not condemn and we don't interfere in these matters," Mr. Tamimi said. "We don't know anything about it... all what we say is that Islam prohibits the killings of women and children." In a statement issued in the occupied territories, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, condemned the blast and stressed its objection to such acts that led to the death of children and civilians. The statement stressed that Hamas' military operations are only aimed at "resisting the Zionist occupation which is the sole enemy of the Palestinian people." "The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, stresses it has no animosity towards the American people or anyone else. It seeks to establish constructive relations with all peoples all over the world," the statement said. "We denounce the incident," said Sayyed Abu Mesameh, a prominent member of Hamas in self-ruled Gaza. "Hamas has no function whatsoever outside the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, and there is no enmity between us and the American people," he said. A spokesman for Islamic Jihad also condemned the Oklahoma blast and both groups rejected any accusations of Islamic involvement. "Jihad confirms that the Islamic movement has absolutely no connection to the incident, and rejects the distorted Jewish accusations against Muslims," the spokesman said.

Jordanian unit in Croatia faces major reduction

AMMAN (J.T.) — The commander of the Jordanian contingent serving with the U.N. peacekeeping forces in Croatia has said he expects a major reduction of the Jordanian troops there to take place following the adoption by the U.N. Security Council of a resolution this month calling for the reduction. Major General Eid Karamel Radwan told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the Jordanian force constitutes the second largest contingent in former Yugoslavia after the French contingent. Since the U.N. decision is to reduce the force by 40 per cent, a major reduction of the nearly 3,000 Jordanian troops would take place, he said. "We do not know the exact date for starting the reduction but we believe it could be the start of May," Maj. Gen. Radwan said. Jordan said in January it would withdraw its peacekeeping troops from

Egyptair ferries 1,000 pilgrims from Libya

JEDDAH (Agencies) — The Egyptian national carrier Egyptair has airlifted 1,000 Libyan pilgrims to Saudi Arabia from Tripoli and Benghazi in the first 24 hours of the operation, Egyptair officials said on Friday. The airlift began on Thursday afternoon after the Libya Sanctions Committee of the United Nations gave Egyptair clearance to move 6,000 Libyan pilgrims to 45 flights to and from the Saudi city of Jeddah, entry point for the Holy City of Mecca. One unauthorised Libyan plane also made the trip, landing in Jeddah on Wednesday evening with 150 pilgrims on board. Egyptair said it had run four flights to Jeddah by early afternoon on Friday but, at the request of the Libyans, would suspend flights on Saturday and Sunday, resuming on Monday. It gave no other reason for the suspension. Company officials said it would take 21 flights to take all the Libyans to Jeddah, where they would all arrive by May 3. The pilgrims will fly back after the pilgrimage ceremonies, which reach a climax around May 9. The United Nations imposed the flight ban and other sanctions in April 1992 because Libya refused to hand over two Libyans wanted by the United States and Britain in connection with the 1988 bombing of a U.S. airliner over the Scottish town of Lockerbie. The official Libyan news agency JANA said an Egyptair plane which went to Libya on Thursday was the first Arab and non-Libyan plane to land in the country since the United Nations banned flights three years ago. Libyan leader Muammar

Qadhafi said his country acted alone to break the U.N. air embargo by flying pilgrims to Mecca, without putting other Arab countries on the spot. The Libyan leader, speaking to crowds in the western city of Ghadames, also vowed to turn his act of defiance into an annual event. Col. Qadhafi said he sent a plane to Saudi Arabia "without seeking to embarrass any Arab country by asking for the right to enter its air space." The plane with 159 pilgrims on board crossed through Egyptian air space before landing in Jeddah Wednesday night. Libyans "decided to act alone by taking the plane from Tripoli to Jeddah, forcing the world to concede to them the sacred right to go to

Egypt spurns NPT extension without Israel signing it

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Egypt on Thursday rejected a U.S. proposal for extending the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), demanding "in the name of peace" that Israel first sign the pact and abolish its nuclear weapons.

"Is it logical," asked Egypt's foreign minister, Imad Musa, "...for states in the region to agree to support an indefinite extension of the treaty when a state within the region is benefiting from an exemption?"

Mr. Musa, speaking on the fourth day of a global conference to renew the 25-year-old treaty, raised the possibility of suspending the month-long meeting without deciding on any extension — in order to build pressure on Israel.

But there seemed little support for that idea. Egypt does not even have full backing from Arab states in its for-nothing campaign.

The United States proposes an unlimited, unconditional extension of the treaty, which recognizes five nuclear powers and requires all other signatories to give up the possibility of nuclear weapons. In exchange, the five powers are pledged to work in good faith towards total nuclear disarmament.

The pact took effect in 1970 for only a 25-year term, and the 178 member nations must now decide to extend it indefinitely, or for a limited period, or for a limited period.

Although only a minority vote is needed, all signatories would remain bound by the pact. Some in the Third World view limited extensions as a periodic renewal of the nuclear arms race.

Trying to bridge the U.S.-Arab gap, South Africa has proposed establishing a permanent committee to study a permanently extended treaty.

Clinton administration officials, who estimate a majority of states now favour indefinite extension, are noting the South African as a way to broaden support.

This might be a way to ease the heat out of the debate," said David Fischer, a non-proliferation expert with the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt.

Mr. Musa spared little heat as he assailed Israel's long-standing refusal to sign the NPT treaty.

It "confronts us with an extremely dangerous situation," the Egyptian official said.

It is generally accepted that Israel has scores of nuclear weapons, although the Israelis neither confirm nor deny it. They say they will consider signing the treaty, or agreeing to a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East, two years after they win peace agreements with all countries in the region.

Mr. Musa said "persistent ambiguities" about Israel's nuclear programme may "lead to proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region and could well carry the seeds of a regional arms race."

He noted that Syria on Wednesday suggested suspending the conference without an extension decision. Syria and Egypt believe holding a treaty renewal in abeyance might prompt the United States and other powers to pressure Israel into signing.

"In the name of peace... Egypt calls upon Israel to reconsider its position," Mr. Musa declared.

An Israeli diplomat, with observer status at the treaty conference, sat through the Mr. Musa speech. An official Israeli source, saying "we want to be as non-confrontational as possible," later described the address only as "disappointing."

It may also be disappointing to some in Washington, where members of Congress had urged the Clinton administration to use U.S. aid to Egypt as a lever for winning Cairo's support.

At this point, apparently only some new gesture from Israel could win Egyptian backing for indefinite extension.

As for other Third Worlders, the United States will work in the next two weeks to find language for the conference's final document to reassure them that the nuclear powers are committed to further reductions and controls on nuclear arms.



'BERBER SPRING': People flash the victory sign in Tizi Ouzou, the main city of the Kabylia region, east of Algiers, during a rally marking the 15th anniversary of the 1980

'Berber Spring' revolt and to demand the official recognition of the Berber language, Tamazight. Tens of thousands of people took part in the March (AFP photo)

Israeli documents say KGB man spied for years

TEL AVIV (AP) — Lifting a seven-year veil of secrecy, Israel has revealed that a Russian émigré who worked in an Israeli weapons factory is serving a 13-year prison sentence for spying for the former Soviet Union.

Gregory Kalman Lunden was arrested in August 1988 and convicted and sentenced in a secret trial, according to a document released by the supreme court.

It was the first time made public any information about Lunden, the latest in a series of Russian immigrants convicted of spying. In recent years, the government has released information about at least two other Soviet immigrants convicted of the espionage.

The document released Wednesday was a partial transcript of a March 1992 ruling in which the supreme court rejected Lunden's

appeal of his sentence. It was not clear why the ruling was made public on Thursday, three years after it was handed down. Large sections of the six-page transcript were deleted for security reasons.

Lunden, 65, left the Soviet Union in 1973, part of the first wave of Soviet Jewish immigrants to the state of Israel. Before leaving, he had been recruited to work for the KGB, according to the court transcript.

Israel Radio said Lunden was trained as an engineer and had been a pilot. In Israel, he worked in a factory that developed army tanks.

Lunden spied on Israel for 15 years until his arrest by Israeli security services in 1988, according to the court. He continued spying even after learning at one point that he was being watched by Israeli security agents, it said.

Following his arrest, Lunden confessed to being a spy and offered to work for Israel in order to "atone" for his deeds, the transcript said.

He "explained that he did what he did for fear that otherwise his family remaining in the Soviet Union would be harmed."

But the court that sentenced Lunden in 1989 noted that even after his arrest, he tried to get information to his handlers warning that he had been double-crossed by someone in Soviet intelligence.

In the appeal, Lunden's attorneys argued there was no proof he was involved in further spying, and emphasized his age and poor health.

But the supreme court decision, written by Justice Eliezer Goldberg, said the sentence was warranted considering "the potential danger if his actions had not been cut off, in addition to the

damage that had already been caused."

The section of the decision detailing the damage Lunden caused was deleted, except for a reference to him providing information about Israeli intelligence agents.

The revelation sparked calls to end Israel's policy of concealing the existence of prisoners convicted of espionage.

"It is forbidden for a free country to keep behind bars people whose imprisonment is not publicly known," said Dedi Zucker, a liberal lawmaker. "A country must not hold prisoners anonymously."

Israel's Channel Two TV said Lunden would be eligible for early release in two years. The TV report also said Lunden's mother and sister had also immigrated to Israel since his arrest.

The monthly salary in Lebanon is around \$150, only a little more than the cost of a year's third party car insurance. The population has already been hit by electricity cuts, increasing poverty, rising taxes and a surge in the cost of living.

But one insurer said the price of insurance "is nothing compared with the terrifying human costs of accidents."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

3 killed as Sudanese planes bomb south villages

NAIROBI (AFP) — Three people, including two children were killed when Sudanese air force bombed villages in the Lopit Hills of Eastern Equatoria province, the rebel South Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM) claimed Friday. Fifty houses were destroyed during the raid on Thursday. It was the third attack on Lopit Hills by government war planes in 10 days and the 15th violation by the Sudanese government of a ceasefire brokered last month by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. SSIM's spokesman here Daniel Mathews said. On Wednesday SSIM said the government bombed the village Loronyo killing five people. Since the ceasefire came into effect on March 28, Khartoum have accused the rebels of violating the truce and threatened to resume fighting again. The rebels blamed the government for the fighting. Mr. Carter on Monday expressed concern at the reported violation and called upon all parties to "exercise restraint and to observe the ceasefire commitments."

Turkey calls NATO council on Kurdish meeting

BRUSSELS (AP) — Turkey called a special meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) council Thursday to protest the setting up of a Kurdish parliament-in-exile in the Netherlands. Officials said. Turkey is angry the Dutch government authorised the meeting in the Hague which included representatives from organisations linked to the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which has been waging a decade-long fight against Turkish rule. Officials at NATO headquarters said the Turkey called ambassadors from the 16 allied nations back from their traditional Easter recess to object to the Kurdish meeting being held on allied territory. Diplomats at both the Dutch and Turkish delegations to NATO declined to comment on the content of the ambassadors' meeting. The protest to NATO is the latest development in a diplomatic quarrel that has already led to Turkey calling home its ambassador to the Netherlands. Turkey has faced criticism from several other NATO nations since it sent 35,000 troops into northern Iraq last month to wipe out PKK bases.

French sculptor begins 'Hope for Peace' statue

BEIRUT (AP) — Renowned French sculptor Arman Fernandez has started work on a "Hope for Peace" statue made out of old weapons which he hopes will help obliterate the horrors of Lebanon's civil war. Mr. Arman said he will gather old artillery guns and other weapons used in the 1975-1990 conflict to build the 20-metre-high statue at the entrance of the Defence Ministry. "We'll pile up all the machinery of war in a monument for peace that will help us forget all about war," he told reporters outside the ministry in suburban Yarz, eight kilometres east of Beirut. "It will be my gift to Lebanon, a monument of war tools built to underscore the determination never to let it happen again," he said. The work will be inaugurated Aug. 1, the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Lebanese army. Mr. Fernandez is internationally famous for his "Long Term Parking" in Paris and the Cavalleria Eroica in Monaco.

Canada returns stolen artifacts to Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt has recovered 400 stolen artifacts seized in Canada last October, antiquities chief Abdul Halim Nureddin said. The pieces, dating back to the pharaonic and Greco-Roman periods, were "seized by Canadian authorities from an antiquities smuggler named Simon Simonian," Mr. Nureddin said, without giving the nationality of the smuggler. "The antiquities were transported from Egypt to Europe years ago," before being taken to Canada, the head of the Supreme Council for Antiquities added. A Montreal court decided in January to restore the pieces to Egypt, he said. The 400 artifacts include statues, masks, coins, mummies and parts of a sarcophagus. A major ring smuggling Egyptian antiquities was busted in London earlier this year.

Turkey to reopen air corridor to Armenia

ANKARA (R) — Turkey has decided to reopen an air corridor to neighbouring Armenia which it closed in 1993, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Thursday. Civil aviation delegations from the two countries met in Ankara on Thursday for talks on the reopening, it said. Ankara closed the corridor which allows flights to Armenia over Turkish territory in protest at an Armenian military drive which seized about 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory. Azerbaijan, which has close ethnic and cultural links to Turkey, had asked Ankara to reopen the corridor. Armenia and Azerbaijan have been locked in a conflict over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh for the last seven years but a ceasefire between the two former Soviet republics has held for the last 10 months.

OAU to send missions to Somalia, Burundi

TUNIS (AFP) — The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) is to send missions to Somalia and Burundi to press for an end to violence and "encourage reconciliation" between warring factions, an OAU spokesman said. Ibrahim Dagacha said the decision was taken by foreign ministers from the 31-nation organisation. The Somalia delegation, due to meet faction leaders there as soon as possible, includes Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi, who has already visited Somalia and called for a multi-faction conference to set up a "broad-based interim authority." On Burundi, ministers looked at way of avoiding that country sliding into a bloody conflict on the scale of Rwanda last year, when between 500,000 and one million people lost their lives in tribal violence. Both countries have the same ethnic make-up.

Family wants executed housemaid buried in UAE

DUBAI (AFP) — The family of a Sri Lankan maid, who was executed in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as a killer for murder, will not allow her to be buried in the UAE, officials said Friday.

Sri Lanka Labour Minister Mahinda Rajapakse blamed lack of communication for the government's inability to intervene in the case. The murder was committed on Oct. 17 and sentenced passed on Jan. 17.

Following a tour of the Middle East last month, Mr. Rajapakse promised to tighten controls on females seeking employment in the region. About 75 per cent of some 500,000 Sri Lankans employed in the Middle East are females.

Mr. Rajapakse also confirmed reports that several Sri Lankan maids had been denied their wages, subjected to abuse, sexual assault and harassment by their Arab employers.

Ms. Wijeratne said both the requests made by the maid's family have been conveyed to the Sri Lankan embassy in the UAE.

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New discovery sheds light on ancient kingdom

DUBAI (AFP) — The discovery of 20 ancient clay tablets in Bahrain will finally shed light on the mysterious Dilmun kingdom which flourished in the Gulf 5,000 years ago.

A team of French archaeologists discovered the perfectly-preserved tablets at the historic seaside site of Qalaat Al Bahrain, five kilometres north of the capital Manama.

The tablets are the first to be found in such good condition bearing inscriptions in Akkadian, the most commonly used language in the Middle East in the second millennium B.C.

Archaeologists hope they will give an insight into Dilmun, now the site of modern-day Bahrain, which was renowned as the mythological kingdom of immortality and the good life.

"These artefacts represent an exceptional discovery for our knowledge of the Dilmun civilisation in the second millennium, and its political and economic ties with the neighbouring kingdoms of the time including Mesopotamia," said Pierre Lombard, the head of the French team.

Photographs of the inscriptions have been sent to Paris to be deciphered by specialists in the Semitic language of Akkad in ancient Babylonia.

Until now archaeologists had only found skeletons, statues and scattered objects of everyday life such as arrows and jars from the Dilmun period.

Most of the tablets were found on the huge stone threshold of an administrative building from the ancient

kingdom.

The Dilmun civilisation sprung up in modern-day Bahrain but also spread to the east coast of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and was at its peak between 2000 and 1700 B.C.

Dilmun is described as "a sacred country where the lion does not kill and the wolf does not capture the lamb."

The latest discoveries should shed new light on the civilisation of the Dilmunians," Mr. Lombard said.

Qalaat Al Bahrain, named after a Portuguese fortress built in the 16th century, is the richest historic site in the Arabian peninsula.

The Gulf archipelago of Bahrain, one of the smallest states, is the largest prehistoric cemetery in the world with 300,000 burial sites.

Religion played a large role in the ancient society and temples have been discovered. One of the tablets lists products such as dates which were given as offerings to the Gods.

Thanks to its geographical position historians know that

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Harry and Henderson
18:30 Witness to Survival
19:00 Road to Avonlea
19:30 Gillette World Sport
20:00 Tarzan
20:30 Le Pain Noir
21:00 News in French
21:30 Pa Ut Pas Reversa
22:00 The Bold and the Beautiful
22:30 Life in the Freezer
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Troops kill 22 at Rwanda camp

KIGALI (Agencies) — Rwandan government troops killed 22 Hutus and wounded about 50 when they opened fire in a filthy overcrowded camp in southwestern Rwanda, aid agency officials said Friday.

They said troops fired into a crowd of displaced Hutus Thursday evening at Kibeho Camp after a man tried to wrestle a rifle from a soldier. Hours earlier, the government troops had fired into the air when displaced men threw stones at them.

The aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF-Doctors Without Borders) said 20 displaced people were killed and two later died of their wounds. An estimated 50 were wounded, aid workers said.

MSF spokeswoman Samantha Bolton said 40 wounded were being treated at the MSF hospital in Kibeho Friday mostly with bullet wounds. Aid workers said troops stopped doctors from evacuating the seriously wounded by air to Kigali for treatment.

Ten displaced Hutus were killed in a stampede at Kibeho, the largest camp for displaced people in the country,

Tuesday when Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) troops cordoned it off and fired in the air.

The estimated 100,000 men, women and children of Rwanda's Hutu majority took refuge on a central hill in Kibeho ringed by troops in a government drive to close camps in the southwest.

Aid workers said an estimated 50,000, many of them believed to be hardline Hutus, were packed into a compound near a Zambian U.N. military base in Kibeho in dismal conditions and short of water.

The workers warned they feared epidemics would break out in the crowded conditions with no sanitation and a U.N. operation to truck the displaced home could take two weeks to complete.

Officials estimate between 125,000 and 200,000 Hutus at four southwestern camps including Kibeho are packed into small areas facing sickness and dehydration since the closure operation began Tuesday.

The government says nine camps for the 250,000 displaced Hutu people in the southwest must be closed be-

cause they harbour militiamen of the Hutu tribal majority a year after Rwanda's genocide in which up to a million people were killed.

Many displaced Hutus and two million Hutu refugees outside Rwanda fear they will be killed in revenge for the genocide by Hutu troops and militiamen of Tutsis and Hutu moderates.

In Geneva, the U.N. refugee agency deplored Friday the closing of Kibeho and other southwestern camps and said it would not forcibly transport their residents away "like cattle."

But the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said it was providing trucks to bring those Rwandans who had agreed to return voluntarily to their villages from Kibeho Camp.

"We urge the Rwandan government to allow these people to at least go back to their huts and retrieve their belongings and to ensure there is an orderly movement back to their home villages," said UNHCR spokesman Ron Redmond.

Mr. Redmond said movement out of the camp must be voluntary.

"We cannot keep living

like this, like beasts with no sleep, water or food. I hope I can leave this hell soon but I fear to go home as I will be arrested. All of us will be arrested," said one man at Kibeho Thursday, out of sight of RPA troops.

MSF said up to 100 people were injured in N'Dago Camp south of Kibeho when they panicked on seeing troops approaching.

Several Hutus killed in Burundi

Meanwhile two families and a regional administrative head have been killed by youths armed with machetes and knives in northeastern Burundi, the Burundi News Agency (ABP) said Friday.

The attack took place Thursday in the troubled town of Gasorwe in Muyinga province.

The victims, like their attackers, were from the Hutu majority and were accused by their assailants of not paying fees to the Hutu People's Liberation Party (PALIPEHUTU), the Hutu extremist movement to which the attackers belonged, ABP said.

The agency did not specify how many people were killed.



Republican Guards stand at attention around the coffin of French scientist Marie Curie and her Polish-born wife Marie Curie during the ceremony for the transfer of their remains to the Pantheon in Paris. In the background

are, from left to right, French President François Mitterrand, Polish President Lech Walesa, French first lady Danielle Mitterrand and French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur (AFP photo)

France pays tribute to Marie Curie

PARIS (R) — Scientist Marie Curie, who won two Nobel Prizes but never had the right to vote, became the first woman to be buried alongside France's "great men" in the Paris Pantheon Thursday.

Outgoing Socialist President François Mitterrand used the grand occasion to make a stirring plea for women's equality.

"She was the symbol of a woman who imposed her capabilities in a society which too often reserves intellectual functions and public responsibilities for men," he declared as the remains of Marie and Pierre Curie, partners in life and in science, were ceremonially laid inside the neo-classical monument.

"In the name of France, I proclaim the hope that equality of rights between men and women may prevail everywhere in the world because the preference granted to men for centuries is unfair and beneath the dignity of civilised societies," he said.

Science students carried

two wooden coffins up Rue Soufflot in the heart of Paris' Latin Quarter to the domed Pantheon that bears the inscription: "A nation grateful to its great men."

The motto has long angered feminists who campaigned for Marie Curie, who discovered radiation and was first woman professor at the Sorbonne, to become the first woman to be buried in the monument in her own right.

Feminists bitterly recalled she never enjoyed the right to vote, only granted to French women after World War II in 1946.

The Curies, previously buried in the Paris suburb of Sceaux, will lie alongside such illustrious figures as writers Voltaire, Rousseau and Victor Hugo and Socialist patriarch Jean Jaures.

In a ceremony reminiscent of the spectacular political festivities of the Mitterrand era, a string orchestra played Bach and dozens of pupils from Marie Curie High School in Sceaux bearing symbolic scientific emblems escorted the coffins.

Fittingly, Marie Curie will now also be close to the remains of Paul Langevin, another great scientist who was her long-time lover after Pierre Curie's death in 1906. She died in 1934.

Polish President Lech Walesa recalled in a brief address that Marie Curie was born Marie Sklodowska in Poland and settled in France to pursue her studies when she was 24.

Marie Curie, who coined such terms as radioactivity, shared the physics Nobel Prize with her husband in 1903 and received the chemistry prize in 1911.

The tribute was one of Mr. Mitterrand's last official acts before his term as president ends next month. He inaugurated his own presidency in 1981 by walking to the Pantheon and laying a red rose on Jaures' grave.

Mr. Mitterrand, 78, stricken with prostate cancer, looked emaciated and his hair was sparse, but his oratory was as spellbinding as ever.

Girl sentenced for fake AIDS calls

JACKSONVILLE, Florida (AP) — A teenage girl who called former hospital patients and told them they had tested positive for the AIDS virus was sentenced to five years' probation and therapy. Tammy Lynn Esckelsen, 13, pleaded guilty to taking confidential information from a computer and making harassing telephone calls. All charges will be dropped if Esckelsen successfully completes probation, said Circuit Judge A.C. Soud Jr. The girl's mother, Darlene Esckelsen, an employee at University Medical Centre, told the judge she took her daughter to work on Feb. 26 because she couldn't find anyone to watch her. She said she didn't want to leave the girl alone because of her history of drug use, truancy and fight with her parents. Esckelsen, after getting the telephone numbers of former emergency room patients from a computer, called seven and told them they had tested positive for the HIV virus. One of her victims tried to commit suicide.

Priest lures lovers to the altar with lottery

OSLO (AFP) — A priest in central Norway is luring love-struck couples to the altar with a 20,000 kroner \$3,280 honeymoon lottery prize if they get hitched before June 20, according to the Adresse newspaper. Priest Bertel Aasen of Orkdal organised the lottery, in collaboration with local sponsors, in a bid to encourage family life in his parish. All couples who announce their marriage by June 20 will be in the running for the drawing of the prize. The only condition is that the couple either live in Orkdal or have family roots there. So far, 23 couples have taken Aasen up on his offer.

Suicide rate among U.S. children soars

ATLANTA, Georgia (AFP) — The suicide rate among U.S. children has soared since 1980 chiefly due to the growing availability of guns, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) said in a report. Between 1980 and 1992, the suicide rate among 10- to 14-year-olds increased 120 per cent, from 0.8 per 100,000 to 1.7, and among 15- to 19-year-olds the rate increased 283 per cent, from 8.5 to 10.9 per 100,000, the report said. By racial groups, the steepest rate increase was among black males, having risen 20 per cent in the 12-year period from 8.5 per 100,000 to 10.1 per 100,000. Among black children aged 10 to 14, the rate jumped 300 per cent from about 0.5 to 2.0 per 100,000. The suicide rate among young white males, the highest overall, rose five per cent from 15.4 per 100,000 to 16.1 per 100,000, the report added. The reasons listed for suicide among children were drug abuse, aggressiveness, family problems and stress. The report, issued Thursday, said firearms were used in half of all suicides among people under 25 years in the same period. CDC physician Alex Crosby said suicidal children turned to guns because they were less likely to fail. "We believe very strongly that guns around children are ticking time bombs," said Gwen Fitzgerald of the Centre to Prevent Handgun Violence. The overall suicide rate for people under 25 has held at a steady 5.5 per cent 100,000 in the period, with 5,007 taking their lives in 1992, the CDC report said.

Mehta to be musical director at Munich Opera

MUNICH, Germany (AP) — World-famous director Zubin Mehta has signed a five-year contract to be general music director at the Bavarian Staatsoper. And Munich opera-lovers are mightily pleased. "A stroke of luck for Munich," the local Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper enthused, a day after the 58-year-old Mehta's deal was announced. The Bombay-born Mehta's contract starts in 1998 and was said to oblige him to conduct 40 performances a year. Mehta is also musical director of the Israel Philharmonic and is former director of the New York Philharmonic. The Staatsoper also announced that Peter Jonas will continue beyond 1998 as overall manager, or intendant, and that Peter Schneider will remain under contract as chief conductor.

9 held in Slovakia with suspected uranium

BRATISLAVA (R) — Nine people from three countries have been arrested in Slovakia after police seized 17 kg (37.4 pounds) of a radioactive material believed to be uranium, the Slovak Interior Ministry said Friday.

Four Slovaks, three Hungarians and two Ukrainians were arrested Thursday after police found the material hidden in a container in a

passenger car stopped near the town of Poprad in eastern Slovakia, the Interior Ministry spokesman, Peter Ondera, told Reuters.

The exact substance and its level of possible enrichment have yet to be determined but test results on the material are expected by Monday, he said. "There are no doubts this is nuclear material, and so far we're sure it's uranium,

but we just don't know what kind," he said.

Mr. Ondera said the car, with Hungarian licence plates and carrying two Hungarian nationals, was followed by police since it entered Slovakia from the Ukrainian border and stopped at the foot of the Tatras Mountain range.

"We know that the car was definitely headed for Hungary, but we don't know the final destination, but the

material was meant to be sold somewhere," he added.

Police also arrested four members of a smuggling ring at airports in the eastern cities of Poprad and Kosice, and three others at another undisclosed point, Mr. Ondera said. All have been charged with either illegal possession of radioactive material or complicity in possession.

Hailstones, rainstorm, tornado kill 37 in China

BEIJING (R) — Hailstones as big as basketballs, a rainstorm and a tornado pounded China's southern Guangdong province, killing at least 37 people and leaving a trail of destruction, officials said Friday.

The hailstones, rainstorm and tornado struck Wednesday, injuring 453 people and leaving another 17 missing, provincial government officials said by telephone.

The storms left a trail of destruction, with economic losses estimated at 300 million yuan (\$35.6 million), they said.

"It was dark as night during the day," one official told Reuters.

"We have hailstones, rainstorms and tornadoes every year, but it is rare for all three to hit on the same day," the official said.

He said 37 people were killed, including one who was struck by lightning, according to the coroner's report.

Several died after being hit by hailstones, while some were sucked in and slammed to the ground by the tornado.

"In Huizhou, we had hailstones as big as basketballs," the official said. The heaviest was found in Zhaoqing City, weighing 15 kilograms.

About 293,000 people were affected, the officials said. A total of 2,197 houses collapsed, 16,993 houses were damaged and 128 boats capsized.

Officials said 1,756 electric poles were toppled, cutting off electricity to thousands of households.

About 13,900 hectares (34,300 acres) of farmland were flooded.

The storm dumped 72mm (2.9 inches) of rain in some places Wednesday and Thursday, weather officials said.

The tornado, packing maximum winds of 60 metres per second, pounded some villages for as long as 20 minutes, the officials said.

The towns of Zhaoqing, Fuoshan, Zhongshan, Huizhou and Guangzhou were the hardest hit, and 11 neighbouring counties and 27 towns and villages were affected.

The storms damaged 35 dams and other water conservancy facilities. Container trucks and cars were overturned and many trees uprooted, the officials said.

Several aircraft at Pingtan Airport in the south of the province were overturned, the Hong Kong-based and Beijing-funded Wen Wei Po newspaper said.

Kiev asks for \$4b to close Chernobyl

KIEV (R) — Ukraine put a \$4 billion price tag on shutting down the Chernobyl nuclear power station Friday and told the West to find the money if it wanted the stricken plant to be closed soon.

"Ukraine cannot close the Chernobyl nuclear power station independently over a short period," said a government statement signed by acting Premier Yevhen Marchuk.

"Experts say that refraining from further use of the station will require general

expenditures of \$4 billion. Such a broad-based programme is impossible without financial support from the world community."

Under pressure from the West, President Leonid Kuchma pledged last week that Ukraine would close the plant — site of the world's worst nuclear accident nine years ago — by 2000.

The Chernobyl fire and explosion, on April 26, 1986, sent radiation over much of Europe and contaminated large swathes of Ukraine,

Russia and Belarus. Ukraine says 8,000 people died as a result of the catastrophe.

But until Friday's statement, the government had refrained from naming specific costs or conditions of the closure.

The statement said that to close Chernobyl Ukraine needed a substitute power plant, either gas-fired, nuclear or coal-burning. The station's two working reactors still produce about five per cent of the country's electricity.



Spanish opposition Popular Party leader Jose Maria Aznar encourages Sergio Delgado Hano (right) who was seriously injured in the bomb attack against Mr. Aznar in Madrid. Mr.

Aznar escaped the bomb attack with minor scratches to his face. Mr. Aznar visited victims at the La Paz Hospital who were wounded in the attack (AFP photo)

Aznar: Basque gunmen will not triumph

MADRID (AP) — The conservative opposition leader who narrowly escaped a car-bomb attempt on his life Thursday warned Basque separatists that their terrorist methods would not succeed.

"They (the gunmen) are not going to triumph, they are going to fail," said Jose Maria Aznar after leaving the hospital where he had been under medical observation for 24 hours.

"These pathetic terrorists are not going to place the great Spanish nation in check," said the 42-year-old politician.

Mr. Aznar escaped injury in the blast Wednesday thanks to his heavily-armoured car. The vehicle remained intact when about 20 kilograms (44 pounds) of explosives packed in a double-parked car blew up as he passed by on the way to work.

Sixteen other people were injured in the explosion, five seriously.

Mr. Aznar's Popular Party (PP), Spain's second-largest, has a strong chance of dislodging the ruling Socialists in general elections set for 1996 or 1997. It supports a strong centralised state and rejects Basque demands for greater self-rule.

"Yesterday it was my turn.

Some other day, it could happen to someone else," Mr. Aznar said. "But whatever the case, I will continue working in every way I can to ensure that in our country these things stop happening."

The attack, blamed on the Basque separatist group ETA, was roundly condemned by the country's political parties and the media.

"ETA failed yesterday, roundly and fortunately, in the most destabilising attack carried out by the terrorist group," said the leading daily El Pais in a front-page editorial.

"... Aznar represents the political option of a good part of our society and to assassinate Aznar means to decapitate one of the two alternatives for government in Spain's democracy," said the Barcelona-based daily La Vanguardia.

"The frustrated assassination confirms that ETA is the biggest threat to the peaceful coexistence of Spaniards," the newspaper added.

Only Herri Batasuna, the political arm of the ETA, distanced itself from the condemnations, saying the attack was "an armed response that surges from our own society with the aim of opening democratic channels for the survival of the Basque

people."

ETA — whose name is a Basque-language acronym for Basque Homeland and Freedom — has killed more than 740 people in its 27-year violent campaign to secure the independence of northern Spain's three Basque provinces.

More than 500 alleged members of the organisation are in prison in Spain either serving sentences or awaiting trial.

The Basque gesture for peace group was to hold silent rallies in different parts of the Basque country Thursday to condemn the attack.

Three months ago, an ETA gunman shot and killed Gregorio Ordóñez, the Popular Party's candidate for mayor of the Basque city of San Sebastian.

Wednesday's attack bore similarities to ETA's 1973 car-bomb assassination of Adm. Luis Carrero Blanco, then Prime Minister under Gen. Francisco Franco and expected to succeed the military dictator.

In contrast to the revulsion expressed over the attempt on Mr. Aznar's life, hundreds of thousands of Spaniards cheered the attack on Carrero Blanco as a blow against Franco's dictatorial regime.

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World News

Girl sentenced for fake AIDS calls

JACKSONVILLE (AP) — A 19-year-old woman was sentenced to 18 months in prison for making false AIDS-related phone calls to a local television station.

Tammy Lynn Eschler, 19, pleaded guilty to making the calls, which were broadcast on the station's news program. Eschler, who lives in Jacksonville, was sentenced by Judge A.C. Smith, an employee of the station.

Eschler, who was arrested in January, had been making the calls for several months. She had been making the calls from a payphone in a public restroom.

Eschler's attorney, who was not named, said that his client was a "victim of a mental illness" and that she had been making the calls as a result of her mental state.

Eschler was released from prison on a \$10,000 bond. She is scheduled to appear in court again in June.



A Bosnian Serb soldier sits on a 20mm, three barrel anti-aircraft cannon placed on Mount Majevica, overlooking the Muslim stronghold in northern Bosnia (AFP photo)

U.N. puts on brave face as Bosnia truce bid fails

SARAJEVO (R) — The United Nations put a brave face on its failure to extend the ceasefire in Bosnia as fresh fighting erupted Friday between Muslim-led government and Bosnian Serb forces.

Leaders from both sides refused to agree to a renewal of the old truce during talks with U.N. special envoy Yasushi Akashi on Thursday. "The mood is realistic," Akashi said.

These were initial discussions, it was never going to be the dramatic treaty. We expect Akashi will come back before the end of the month to pick up where things were left off, U.N. spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward said.

The four-month ceasefire, marked by continued fighting in Sarajevo and elsewhere in Bosnia, ends on May 1.

Mr. Akashi's mission coincided with a rise in shelling attacks and a claim by the Bosnian government army that it had scored gains on the battlefield.

Army officers said on state television their troops had captured important high ground south-east of Sarajevo five days ago, reviving a military push eastward.

Sarajevo television showed Bosnian soldiers trudging through deep snow around the Djokan Toranj peak 40 kilometres from Sarajevo, which is surrounded by Serb forces.

Bosnian Radio reported fighting in the Breko area, which straddles the vital corridor along the Sava River connecting Serb lands in eastern and western Bosnia.

Col. Coward said there was significant military activity with attacks and counter-attacks in the Velika Kladusa area in the northwest Bihać pocket.

Heavy shelling was reported along the confrontation line from Doboj to Kalesija in the northeast parts of central Bosnia, with over 3,000 detonations in that area.

An 82mm mortar landed Thursday evening within the Tito Barracks area of Sarajevo, close to the Ukrainian and French U.N. bases. Col. Coward reported no damage or injuries in the incident.

U.N. spokesman Alexander Ivanko said: "It seems both sides are more and more inclined to actively breach the ceasefire. We are seeing it across the board, across the country."

The Bosnian government said it could not accept extending the current ceasefire, which expires on May 1, saying the Serbs only wanted to cement their territorial conquests while stalling on political negotiations.

International pressure has failed to move the Bosnian Serbs from their rejection of a peace plan drawn up by the major powers' contact group made up of the United States, Britain, France, Germany and Russia.

The Security Council intends to relax some sanctions against rump Yugoslavia for another 75 days after a struggle that showed sharp divisions among the United States and its allies spearheading Bosnia peace efforts.

The sanctions, affecting air travel and sporting and cultural ties, were scaled back temporarily last year in return for a pledge by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to cut off military supplies to neighbouring Bosnian Serbs.

The relaxation was conditional on good behaviour by Yugoslavia and the United States wanted the council to send a clear signal to Belgrade, believing cooperation with the Bosnian Serbs had continued.

Russia offers Chechen talks, sees the war over by May

MOSCOW (R) — Russia Friday offered to start talks with Chechen rebels on an unconditional ceasefire and predicted a "natural end" to the war by next month.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin made the offer in an appeal to the Chechen people read out at a conference in their capital Grozny.

"There will be no preconditions, and furthermore no repression," Interfax News Agency quoted the message as saying.

But it remains unclear whether talks will take place and there was no reaction from the Chechen side.

The former commander of Russian troops in the breakaway region last month ruled out ceasefire talks with rebels unless they laid down their arms and disbanded.

Mr. Chernomyrdin's statement, read out by Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Semyonov, included the offer of an amnesty "for those who were deceived into joining the armed volunteers."

Another Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakrai, said the conference in Grozny, attended by 350 local officials, elders and religious leaders, was a positive sign.

In an interview with Interfax News Agency, he predicted a natural end to the war towards the end of April, saying that the main pockets of resistance in the region had been crushed.

"It is pointless to carry out military action in the mountains, where the remaining forces of the illegal armed formation are being pushed by the regular army," he said.

In a separate report, Interfax quoted the Ministry of Transport as saying a key rail route linking Russia to the Transcaucasus had been reopened after seven months, allowing a goods train to travel through Chechnya to Azerbaijan.

Friday's upbeat reports contrasted with an admission by Russian military sources Thursday that they had suffered setbacks in their campaign to wipe out forces loyal to the mostly-Muslim region's separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

The leader of the Chechen administration installed by Moscow was quoted as saying local agreements not to use airstrikes meant it could take a week to repel fighters holed up in a former Soviet missile site in the village of Bamut, near the border with Russia's district of Ingushetia.

NTV independent television quoted military sources as saying that a fresh attempt to take the town could not be made until the mountains surrounding it were cleared of rebel fighters.

Military experts have said that a last push on several pockets of resistance clearly showed Russia was hoping to stop fighting before dozens of world leaders descend on Moscow for the May 9 anniversary of the allied victory in World War II.

Local human rights groups and foreign leaders have been extremely critical of Russia's Chechen campaign, in which thousands of soldiers, rebels and civilians have been killed.

U.S. President Bill Clinton has faced domestic pressure not to attend the victory day celebrations and only announced recently, after hesitating for months, that he would go.

Meanwhile six people died in gunbattles after a group of soldiers broke out of an army base in the Buryatia region of Siberia and were pursued by security forces, the Buryat Interior Ministry reported Friday.

Four members of the Russian security forces were among those killed.

The commander of the guard and deputy commander of the unit based near Ulan Ude, capital of the Buryat Republic, died when the soldiers fired on them during their break-out overnight Wednesday.

Two of the deserters were captured but the others fled by car. Police found them late Thursday near Ivolga, a village 30 kilometres from Ulan Ude.

The deserters, armed with automatic weapons, fired on the police, killing one and wounding four others. One policeman later died of his wounds.

Two of the deserters were killed, one was captured and another fled during the police operation, the Buryat Interior Ministry said.

Japan struck by new reports of fumes

TOKYO (AFP) — Police launched a search for the leader of a doomsday sect believed behind for a murderous nerve-gas attack on the Tokyo subway as a similar but minor incident was reported in nearby Yokohama Friday.

In the latest incident at least 24 people were treated in hospital for sore throats, coughing and stinging eyes after inhaling fumes at a department store in Yokohama, Japan's second largest city, police said.

The store was located only 100 metres from the teeming central railway station, where more than 600 people fell sick Wednesday afternoon after inhaling a foul-smelling gas of undetermined origin.

Dozens of others were also affected Friday by a similar acid-like gas on a train which passed by the station at the same time in what was described by police as a "deliberate assault on innocent people."

Victims reported that the fumes had no particular smell. They suffered from slight inflammation in the eyes, nose and throat, doctors said.

"Their symptoms are very light. They can all go home," Hiroshi Yoshii, a doctor at Saiseikai, one of the hospitals, told reporters.

Firefighters, wearing gas masks, chemical protection suits and oxygen tanks, worked with police to seal off and scour the department store in late evening.

"I choked when I smelled it. I saw several other people coughing around me," one young man told the Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK).

Another boy said, "My nose began to hurt and my mouth salivated a lot."

The events occurred about a month after the March 20 attack on the Tokyo subway with sarin gas which killed 12 people and injured some 5,500.

Police suspect the doomsday cult Aum Supreme Truth of masterminding the Tokyo attack but they have yet to announce the discovery of any decisive evidence.

Press reports Friday said police had launched a nationwide search for Aum's guru Shoko Asahara who, in an upcoming book, warns of a "national disaster" if the government "oppresses a prophet."

The national police agency has ordered regional police headquarters across the nation to bring Asahara in for questioning if they are able to find him.

400 more British troops leave N. Ireland

BELFAST (AFP) — Another 400 British soldiers were pulled out of Northern Ireland Friday in the second troop withdrawal since the Irish Republican Army's ceasefire almost eight months ago.

Officers and men of the 40th Regiment Royal Artillery began leaving Royal Air Force Aldergrove, County Antrim, at breakfast time. They arrived in Belfast last January on a six-month emergency tour.

They are returning to Hohne, Germany, to begin a re-requirement and training programme. They were all expected to be back in Germany by tonight.

This is the second major withdrawal in just a few weeks — 5th Regiment Royal Artillery left Armagh (south) last month — and it now means up to 900 soldiers have been pulled out of the province since the violence stopped last August.

It is the second official troop withdrawal from Ulster since 1969, start of the sectarian conflict that left 3,173 dead and more than 36,500 wounded.

Chirac appears confident as campaign nears end

PARIS (R) — French presidential front-runner Jacques Chirac appeared confident of victory Friday, taking it easy two days ahead of the election's first round as his major rivals battled for a spot in the run-off two weeks away.

Mr. Chirac, the conservative mayor of Paris, planned a radio interview but no rallies on the last day of campaigning.

However his fellow-Gaullist rival, Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, and Socialist Lionel Jospin, locked in a neck-and-neck race for second place, toured the country in a frantic search of last-minute support ahead of Sunday's vote.

Both urged electors to "vote usefully" on the first ballot rather than casting a symbolic protest vote for one of six other contenders who have no prospect of reaching the May 7 run-off.

Mr. Chirac, 62, warned campaign workers against over-confidence at a meeting in the Paris suburb of Vincennes Thursday night.

"Nothing is decided," he said. "Right up to the last minute, we must convince those who are hesitating or undecided. We know that there are many of them. Until the last minute, please remain engaged, remain active, remain mobilised."

The nine contenders are competing for the votes of France's 39.9 million electors, at least one-third of whom are expected to support fringe candidates, with the rest choosing among Mr. Chirac, Mr. Jospin and Mr. Balladur.

Opinion polls may not be published in France in the last week of the campaign, although some were published in Britain and Switzerland Friday.

The main suspense concerns the run-off if, as expected, no one wins a first-round majority in the race to succeed Socialist Francois Mitterrand, who has served two seven-year terms.

The last polls published in France gave Mr. Chirac a comfortable lead over Mr. Jospin, who was only slightly ahead of Mr. Balladur.

Twice a loser in previous presidential runs, Mr. Chirac came from behind to sweep into the lead in early March with a promise of radical change, though he gave few policy details.

He leaptfrogged over Mr. Balladur, who was hit in late February by a wiretapping scandal, a Franco-American spy row and controversy over his personal finances.

Scrambling to recover, the prime minister tried to shed his aristocratic image and declared that he too stood for change, but without the risks and zig-zags he attributed to Mr. Chirac.

The Paris mayor sparked controversy this week with an attack on the governor of France's independent central bank, who had called for continued wage restraint.

Analysts said the attack could cut both ways, making Mr. Chirac look like a fighter to the common but scaring middle-class and older people concerned about monetary stability.

Mr. Balladur, boosted by veteran ex-Prime Minister Raymond Barre's attendance at his final rally in Lyon, focused Friday on voters tempted to cast a first-round ballot for fringe candidates on the right.



French Socialist presidential candidate Lionel Jospin (2nd right) waves upon his arrival at his final campaign rally with his wife Sylviane (left), Lille Mayor Pierre Mauroy, campaign director Jacques Delors (centre) and campaign spokeswoman Martine Aubry (right). The latest polls show Mr. Jospin running second behind Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac with 19 and 21 per cent of the vote in the first round of the election. The official campaign ends tomorrow at noon (AFP photo)

U.S. gunman kills 2, injures before surrendering

HADDON HEIGHTS, New Jersey (AFP) — A transsexual gunman shot and killed a police officer and injured another before surrendering after a 14-hour standoff.

The gunman, Leslie Nelson, was known as Glenn Beatty before his sex-change operation. He surrendered to police at 4:30 a.m. after keeping them at bay for 14 hours in a house in Camden County.

The police officers determined that Nelson had been arrested for possessing illegal weapons.

A search warrant was issued for the premises, and the two officers and the investigator returned to the house in the early afternoon.

The officers were trying to execute the search warrant when they were shot, Assistant Prosecutor Joseph, Audino said.

Witnesses said they heard as many as 100 gunshots, and Nelson barricaded himself inside the house with the investigator.

"It sounded like a war was starting," said Albert Boyne, who was walking through the neighbourhood when the shooting began.

FBI negotiators spoke to Nelson by phone and bullhorn while scores of police officers kept vigil around the floodlit house. Neighbours were evacuated to a church.

The Philadelphia Inquirer quoted Nelson's uncle as saying that Nelson had undergone a sex-change operation approximately two years ago. The uncle did not give his name.

The name of the child and his or her relationship to the gunman was not immediately known.

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Jitters hit rival blocs in key Italian election

ROME (R) — Jitters hit Italy's two main political blocs Friday ahead of regional elections Sunday that are being treated as a trial run for a general election.

Fears that small parties could dilute their support, and the prospect of a low turnout, were a common theme of closing appeals to voters.

A poll by the centre-right and Massimo D'Alema of the centre-left.

Some 90 per cent of Italy's electorate is eligible to take part in Sunday's polls to elect regional assemblies in 15 of the country's 20 regions. Provincial and municipal council elections will also take place in many areas.

The elections will be the first since the resignation of Romano Prodi as prime minister last December after stormy months in office.

Mr. Berlusconi, felled when the Northern League party pulled out of his government, has said he will regard even the slightest victory for his Freedom Alliance coalition as endorsement of his call for a snap parliamentary election as early as June.

"Moderate voters should know that what is at stake this time is the future of the country," Mr. Berlusconi told supporters in Florence on Thursday night.

"Every vote given to a single party that has no chance of winning is a wasted vote and a gift to the left," he said.

Mr. Berlusconi was referring to the small reformist group of maverick Marco Pannella, an occasional ally who has decided to go it alone in the elections.

The centre-left, in which Mr. D'Alema's ex-communist Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) is the dominant force, faces similar problems from the Marxist party Communist Refoundation and the League, which is running alone in its northern heartland.

Mr. D'Alema has appealed to backers of the two parties to give the second of their two votes to the centre-left bloc.

The regional elections take place under a new system by which 80 per cent of seats are assigned by proportional representation and the remainder by direct voting.

The system has given further encouragement to an emerging bipolar system in Italy that will put two distinct camps against each other in a general election now widely expected this year.

Mr. D'Alema, who has said he will see an 8-7 loss in the regions as essentially a draw in Sunday's vote, is tipping October as the likeliest month.

"Those who talk about a June election are doing so merely for reasons of propaganda," he said.

Italy has been governed since January by a stop-gap technocratic government headed by Lamberto Dini, a former central banker and treasury minister under Mr. Berlusconi.

Backed in parliament by the centre-left, Mr. Dini has set itself a limited four-point programme.

He is expected to present a proposal on pension reform — the last item on his agenda — immediately after the vote but also wants to draw up the broad outlines of Italy's 1996 state budget before the steps down.

Polling stations are open Sunday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (0500 to 2000 GMT). Exit polls will be released right after voting ends but the count will not begin until Monday morning.



French Prime Minister and presidential candidate Edouard Balladur speaks to reporters in a plane returning to Paris from the eastern city of Reims, where he held a campaign meeting. The first round of elections is set for April 23 (AFP photo)

News
Iraqi as
debat
plan

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Terrorism hurts everybody

THE EXPLOSION that ripped through a nine-storey U.S. federal office building in the heart of Oklahoma City Wednesday morning and took the lives of tens of innocent people including children and injured so many others has shocked the international community and caused pain and sorrow worldwide. Never has the world been so united in condemning a terrorist attack than in the aftermath of this carnage. Countries, big and small, and factions from the right and the left have all joined the international chorus that unanimously denounced the bombing attack against a civilian target.

In view of the similarity of the Oklahoma bombing with the 1993 terrorist explosion at the World Trade Centre, some observers have already hinted that some Muslim extremists could be behind the latest act. Others have insinuated that an American religious sect could have been behind it.

But whoever committed the heinous crime, and whatever their reason, we in Jordan as elsewhere in the Middle East remain resolute in our condemnation of any and all terrorist acts that aim to undermine the course of stability and humanity worldwide. His Majesty King Hussein spoke for all of us when he sent a cable to U.S. President Bill Clinton not only to denounce the massacre but also to offer all assistance in the efforts to apprehend the culprits.

The people of Jordan are equally stunned by the attack but fear the implications and the shock waves. At the same time, though, we have to warn against any attempt to stereotype Arabs and Muslims, as indeed happened in the past, especially that guilt by association is wrong at best. Any precipitous backlash against one country or people or religion or another is alien to a fair sense of justice. We therefore hope that the international community would join in one coordinated and concerted effort to apprehend the culprits and all those associated with them without pointing an accusing finger towards one direction or another unjustifiably and unnecessarily.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i daily commented on Iraq's rejection of the latest U.N. Security Council resolution allowing Baghdad to sell limited amounts of oil to buy drugs and food by saying that the rejection could be a wrong move because the Iraqi people are dire need of assistance. Sultan Al Hattab said the Iraqi leadership could regret its action later when it realises that the West is not concerned over the sufferings of Arabs; nor is it affected by the Baghdad rejection of the resolution. The Western powers, which are doing a grave injustice to the 18 million Iraqis, are not moved by reports of the death of Iraqi children, he said. In light of Baghdad's rejection of the U.N. resolution, Western media would now present the Iraqi regime as the party which does not seek an end to the sanctions to alleviate the suffering of its people, said the writer. I had wished that Baghdad would accept the U.N. resolution because it could mean the start of a complete lifting of the sanctions and a partial alleviation of the suffering of its people, added the writer. He said that Iraq's foes are the only party that is rejoicing now over Baghdad's decision.

MAHMOUD RIMAWI, a columnist in Al Ra'i, described the convening of the General Assembly of the Arab Thought Forum in Doha as a significant event aimed at ending the rift among the Arabs after many years of disarray. The meeting of representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations after a long break caused by the events in the Gulf means a great deal to the Arab World as it opens new dialogues aimed at reconciling Arab people and Arab governments, said the writer. Urging the scholars meeting in Doha to help bridge the gap among Arab countries, the writer said that their meeting in one of the Gulf states was important, noting that their efforts would be well appreciated by the Arab masses. The writer said that failure of the scholars and thinkers to influence the public in the past was largely due to the lack of support they should have received from Arab governments. The resumption of the meetings, said the writer, rekindles new hopes in the hearts of the Arab people for a brighter future.

Jordanian Perspective

Oklahoma bombing is a crime against humanity

By Dr. Musa Keilani

REGARDLESS of whoever was behind it, Wednesday's bombing in Oklahoma that killed dozens of Americans, including many children, is an act that should be condemned in the strongest terms. There can be no justification whatsoever for the crime, and whoever perpetrated it deserve(s) the maximum penalty on earth.

Perhaps the Oklahoma explosion is one of those rare incidents over which the civilised world is united. Those who have the slightest sympathy for whoever was behind the bombing do not belong to the civilised world; they come from the darkest corners of human mind.

The blast comes at a time when vested interest groups in the West have stepped up their campaign against Muslims and Arabs, highlighting the negative interpretation of Islam, particularly taking heart from extremism that we see today in Egypt and Algeria.

No doubt, these groups would exploit the incident to any extent to serve their goal of discrediting Muslims and Arabs, giving little credit to the fact that most of the militant groups in the Middle East have denounced the blast in severe terms and denied having played any role in the incident.

The campaign against Arabs and Muslims has reached such a high point that it is not beyond imagination to see accusing fingers pointed at Muslims and Arabs if someone

important in Washington stumbles in his or her bathroom and suffers a fracture.

It was very telling that in less than 30 minutes after the explosion, a local television station in Oklahoma reported that police were looking for three people with "Middle Eastern" appearance who were "seen leaving the area" shortly before the blast. The report, which was subsequently denied, exposed the mindset of many in the United States that any "terrorist" incident anywhere in the world cannot but be linked to the Middle East, particularly Muslims and Arabs.

Then came the all-point bulletin for "two white men" and the arrest of a man in London who was subsequently flown back to the U.S.

The next few days should produce more details of the investigations, and only then we might be able to get any inkling of who were behind the dastardly crime and what motivated them to undertake it.

That is only one part of the incident. The other is the fallout that the Middle East and the Arab and Islamic world would suffer even if it was proved that it was a strictly American group, like the Branch Davidian whose followers have an axe to grind with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, behind the explosion.

It was only natural for the world media to see similarities between the Oklahoma explosion and the Feb. 26, 1993,

blast at New York's World Trade Centre. Behind those comparisons is the fact that people are also seeking clues to link those implicated in the World Trade Centre attack with the Oklahoma bombing. By extension, the picture that is brewing in the American mind is that of people from the Middle East bent upon wreaking havoc in the United States—"bringing Middle Eastern terrorism to American homes," as many columnists in the U.S. call it.

Reports from the Philippines that Arabs were allegedly involved in the running conflict between the government and dissidents in that country are another brick against the efforts of the Middle East, particularly Jordan and similar-minded countries in the region, to get across their message that they are as committed as anyone else in the fight against terrorism and extremism.

What options do we have in our drive to stamp out the root causes of extremism, whether in the Middle East or elsewhere? Very little, given the gaping socio-economic differences in the region at every level of the society.

But that should not lead us to lowering our vigil and slackening our campaign against all forces of evil, regardless of whatever name they assume and whatever ideologies they propagate because it is from those names and ideologies that incidents like the World Trade Centre and Oklahoma bombings are likely to be born in sick minds.

International effort needed to fight terrorism

By Elia Nasrallah

THE OKLAHOMA blast, the situation in the occupied Arab territories, the Iraqi question and a host of domestic issues featured in the local Arabic press last week.

Condemning the blast in Oklahoma, a writer in Al Dustour said the fact that acts of terrorism have started to occur in such major and advanced nations like the United States and Japan indicates that terrorism knows no boundaries. Indeed, terrorism has become an international problem that cannot be fought through regular armed forces and rockets but through international cooperation and the establishment of justice, said Taher Al Adwan. It is regrettable, the writer said, that the world Zionism and certain Western media have been exploiting this terrorist act to accuse the Arabs and Muslims of being behind it. He said that Arab and Muslim nations have a duty to confront such practices at the diplomatic level.

Echoing the writer's call, Al Dustour daily said in an editorial that Israel has promptly tried to exploit the tragic situation in a manner that would best serve its interests. Accusing the Arabs and Muslims of being the perpetrators of the Oklahoma blast would do nothing to solve the international terrorism ques-

tion, said the paper. International terrorism, which has wreaked havoc in the world, has now reached the United States, it said. The attack was not directed at women and children in the building, but rather at the United States as a major power that has been acting as the police of the world, making a lot of enemies, it added.

Another Al Dustour columnist said that the United States is now paying the price of adopting double standards in its dealings with world questions and the terrorists are expected to launch further attacks to hurt America. Mohammad Kawash said that through its policies, the United States has made more enemies than any other nation, and through its provocative attitude in dealing with the developing nations, it has paved the ground for the creation of terrorist groups which are now targeting American interests.

Urging the various Palestinian groups and factions to follow the example of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, a writer in Shihani said that Israel understands only the language of violence and force. Bassam Haddadin, who is a member of the Lower House of Parliament, said the heroic

resistance activities conducted by Hamas and its allies are serving the interests of the Palestinian people and speeding up the liberation of Palestine. The Israeli government is wrong to believe that its security measures against the Palestinians can stop the heroic actions.

Basam Emoush, a writer in Al Ra'i, described the

vis-a-vis the occupation of Arab lands can only please the opponents of peace in the region and are bound to reflect negatively on the peace process. The writer said that Israel is refusing to withdraw its forces from the Palestinian lands, is dragging its feet on the question of withdrawal from the Syrian Golan Heights and is telling the Egyptians that it is determined to hold on to its nuclear arsenal. The writer said that the future is not on the side of Israel whose aggressive policies are provoking the Arabs. He said that the future strategic weapon that would have a crucial impact in the Arab-Israeli conflict is the demographic bomb, which the Arabs possess.

Jordan's call on Israel to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) reflects the Kingdom's belief that nuclear weapons can never make peace, said Al Aswaj newspaper. Only justice and real security acceptable to the Arabs and their future generations, said the paper, can create the right atmosphere of stability, security and peace. Since peace has become the strategic option for the parties in the Middle East, there can be no need for nuclear weapons because, peace should not be imposed through threats and force, said the daily.

A writer in Al Ra'i condemned Turkey's invasion of northern Iraq under the

pretext of fighting the Kurds. Instead of resorting to the U.N. Security Council to complain against the alleged Kurdish attacks on Turkish positions, and instead of discussing the issue with the Iraqi government, Ankara sent in its troops in total disregard to Iraq's sovereignty, said Yousef Abdullah Mahmoud. The invasion of Iraq, which suffers from crippling sanctions, is not justified under any norms or laws, although it is supported by the United States which advocates the so-called new world order.

A writer in Al Dustour said that Iraq has complied with all U.N. resolutions, subjected its facilities to international inspection, withdrew its forces from Kuwait, recognised Kuwait's international borders and has been living in peace with its southern neighbour. It is time that the world community lifted the sanctions on the Iraqi people and allowed Iraq to sell its oil freely, said Michael Jumeian. The writer said that the world community ought to find a way to terminate the sanctions and stop being prisoner of America's whims and desires, because, he said, the United States' adamant position towards the sanctions is motivated by its desire to lay its hands on Iraq's oil wealth.

A writer in Al Ra'i urged the concerned authorities to launch a nation-wide

campaign to urge people to register for voting in the July municipal elections. Nazih said that so far it has been noticed that public turnout for registration is poor and it is feared that rush for registration could take place as the deadline for the process nears. To avoid complications and the rush, said the writer, the concerned authorities ought to take some action that would save the country a real crisis.

Advising the voters in the municipal elections to elect the right person for the right position, Saleh Qallab, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that it is time that the people realised the fact that voting in municipal elections is part of the democratic process. It is the duty of Jordanian citizens to choose honest and dedicated persons to run their municipalities affairs and improve municipal services, said the writer.

As Jordanians keep calling for the establishment of institutions and building the state of law, they must insist that the events at the University of Jordan be dealt with firmly and through the law, said Abdullah Al Khatib, a writer in Al Dustour. The time has come, said the writer, for Jordanians to put the concept of law before the tribal considerations and to hold those responsible for the clashes accountable for their actions.

Amid sanctions, private sector booms in revolutionary Libya

By Anthony Shadid
The Associated Press

TRIPOLI, Libya — Mercedes cars, Italian shoes, American stereos and designer clothes clutter the swank shops along Gergesh Street in one of Tripoli's ritziest neighbourhoods. Business is booming in once-auster, revolutionary Libya.

Three years after U.N. sanctions were imposed, Libya's private sector has gained momentum, surprising diplomats and foreigners accustomed to the bare shelves of the 1980s and filling the pockets of an emerging merchant class in Libya's big cities.

"There's an embargo but you can get everything," said Stefan Sterzik, a senior accountant at Wintershall Libya, a German oil company. "But, of course, it's for a special price."

The sanctions—a ban on air travel, an arms embargo and the downgrading of diplomatic links—appear to have forced Col. Muammar Qadhafi's regime into a delicate balancing act.

Keen to curry the favour of Libya's wealthy, Col. Qadhafi has given a free reign to imports and exports. The poor, mean-

while, still receive heavily subsidised basic goods, softening the crunch of inflation. At the official rate, \$3 equals one Libyan dinar. On the black market, \$1 buys 3.35 dinars.

Flour, sugar, tea, cooking oil, tomato paste and rice are sold at bargain subsidised prices. A loaf of bread or a kilogram of sugar, for instance, costs a few cents. Education and health care are free.

Despite pressure from the United States, the sanctions have not been broadened to curb Libya's oil sales because of reluctance by European customers.

Still, sanctions have had some effect, especially on those with fixed incomes. In 1990, an estimated 70 per cent of all salaries Libyan workers were on the government payroll. Some haven't been paid in months, diplomats say, and inflation has drastically cut their purchasing power. The average government worker makes about 250 dinars a month.

But that hasn't stopped the boom in parts of Tripoli. Stores along Gergesh Street sell toys from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Satellite dishes from Egypt, England and Korea, and

shoes from Italy and Spain. Imported foods are stacked on shelves.

In a 300-metre stretch, five stores are being built.

"In 1991, the stores and shops were simple and limited and work was difficult. But there's growth now," said Brer Mohammad Ibrahim, a 26-year-old Sudanese immigrant working at a store selling kitchenware from Egypt, Italy and Japan.

He, too, complains about prices but says business is good.

"The middle class isn't necessarily bigger, but their thinking definitely is," Mr. Ibrahim said.

A few stores down, at a satellite dish distributor, a Libyan named Ali who refused to give his last name, said there's been marked growth over the past few years. His most expensive dish goes for 8,000 dinars (\$2,400), and he says he has customers.

"There is vibrancy and there's development," he said. "Step by step, it's increasing." He described the freedom given to businessmen as "compensation for the sanctions."

As Ali said, a taxi driver, put it, "there's a new store going up every day."

It's a far cry from the radical economic measures once taken by Col. Qadhafi in his push for "Islamic socialism."

In the late 1970s, all importing was transferred to 62 public corporations. A large number of private companies were taken over by so-called worker's committees, part of Col. Qadhafi's decentralised system known as the "mass state."

In 1981, all retail shops were told to close and retail business was to be taken over by state-administered supermarkets, but the plans were never fully carried out. The state supermarkets were poorly organised and fraught with shortages, giving rise to a thriving black market.

But after the collapse in the price of oil, which accounts for 99 per cent of Libya's exports, Col. Qadhafi undertook some efforts at privatisation. Now he's prone to extol the virtues of private enterprise.

Western diplomats say how he balances the needs of the poor with the growth of the private sector may determine how long he can stave off bigger repercussions from the sanctions.

King condemns

(Continued from page 1)

"We condemn the bombing in Oklahoma because we reject under any ally any act targeting innocent people and children," Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, the spiritual guide of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah

said. Sheikh Fadlallah's comments were made in his weekly sermon at a mosque in predominantly Shiite south Beirut.

He said all levels of humanity have been harmed by the Oklahoma bombing by

the 1993 World Trade Centre blast in New York and by bombings in Europe.

"Neither Islam nor Christianity has anything to do with such acts," he said, adding that children and innocent people must be protected anywhere.

Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama has expressed his condolences to

victims of the bombing.

"I deeply sympathise with your grief," Mr. Murayama said in a message to President Clinton. "I hope the government of the United States will overcome this tragedy."

In Jakarta, Indonesia expressed deep concern over the April 19 bombing, describing it as "irresponsible" and "against humanity."

LETTERS

Action needed to protect Kingdom from irresponsible tourists

To the Editor:

I READ with great interest Mr. G. Saudi's letter to the editor "The Israeli tourism threat" (Jordan Times, April 11). "One hears a lot about the acts of Israeli tourists in Jordan but feels inclined to dismiss what he/she hears as rumours. But with a responsible person like Mr. Saudi speaking about these acts, I believe this issue should be taken up seriously. We all know that in Israel there is a penalty for picking wild flowers, particularly from the roots. Environmental awareness has become global. As a Jordanian proud of our heritage and concerned about the environment, I find it difficult to keep accepting the continuation of such an "abuse" of our heritage and nature.

As a citizen, I appeal to our non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to take action to protect our heritage and the environment. I think it could prove fruitful if they can coordinate and cooperate and come up with a solution. I have great confidence that they will be able to remedy what is going on.

It is ironic that the same edition of the Jordan Times that carried Mr. G. Saudi's letter also reported that an Israeli team visited a wildlife reserve in Jordan and was briefed on the works of one of Jordan's environmental societies, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature.

Lamia Nassar,
Amman.

Arousing readers' interest

To the Editor:

I, TOO, am a reader of Dr. Majdoub's excellent essays, which appear in the Jordan Times on Thursdays. His topics are timely and cover a wide array of societal and educational concerns. However, it was interesting to note that only the article on animal abuse aroused enough emotion for reader comment.

Sue Dahdah,
Amman.

Iraqi assembly to debate U.N. oil plan Monday

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq's parliament will meet on Monday to discuss a U.N. offer to let Baghdad export oil to pay for humanitarian needs, an official newspaper said on Friday.

Iraq's cabinet has already flatly rejected the proposed deal and it has been strongly criticised by ministers and in the official press.

The National Assembly (parliament) is to hold on Monday an ordinary session... to discuss articles and paragraphs of the latest Security Council Resolution No. 986 and its negative impact on the life of the Iraqi people," the official Al Iraq newspaper reported on Friday.

The paper gave no further details but said the assembly had asked its 250 members to attend.

Iraq has been barred by the U.N. from exporting its oil since Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait in 1990, precipitating the Gulf war which drove the Iraqis out of the emirates.

The U.N. earlier this month renewed and sweetened an offer to Iraq to let it sell limited amounts of oil — up to \$2 billion worth over six months — to buy food and medicines, but Iraq has seen the proposal as an infringement on sovereignty.

Iraq is particularly unhappy with the U.N. monitoring of food distribution inside the country and the earmarking of \$130 million to \$150 million for U.N. relief programs to aid rebel Kurds in northern Iraq.

The mayor of the Iraqi capital said Friday Baghdad's 4.5 million inhabitants are suffering from severe water shortages and insanitary conditions because of the U.N. embargo.

Mohammad Taher Hassun appealed for help for the city as it celebrated annual Baghdad Day, marking its foundation in 762.

"Supplies of drinking water and sewage treatment are in a terrible state of disrepair since the bombardment of installations during the 1991 Gulf war," Mr. Hassun told AFP.

"This is likely to increase the number of deaths among the population," the mayor added.

He said he had sent messages to his counterparts in other Arab countries asking them to help "save the historic city of Baghdad" and secure the lifting of the embargo.

Palestinian 'suspect' released

(Continued from page 1)

questioned by federal officials at the Chicago airport right after the blast and was released. He then flew to London, where British officials detained him at the request of the United States and sent him back for more questioning Thursday evening.

One FBI official said Mr. Ahmad could have fit the profile of suspected perpetrators and he simply may have been "in the wrong place at the wrong time."

A Jordanian government statement said Mr. Ahmad was born in the Israeli-occupied West Bank town of Jenin in 1963. He went to the United States nearly 10 years ago to study electrical engineering, stayed on and gained U.S. citizenship, the statement added.

The statement said: "The government of Jordan emphasises its firm stand against terrorism in all shapes and forms," the statement said. Jordan condemns terrorism and reiterates its readiness to cooperate with all parties concerned to fight terrorism, and those who support and/or endorse it."

Mr. Ahmad's luggage in Rome was seized by the FBI. Italian police turned the luggage over to U.S. investigators, who are expected to send them back to the United States as soon as Italy gives its approval, the sources said.

Italian police said they had inspected Mr. Ahmad's luggage in Rome where they found it contained materials that could be used to make explosives.

A spokesman for Alitalia airlines said Friday the man's luggage had been examined by U.S. security in Chicago before being sent on to Rome.

The airline's press service said the three bags were

go. Baghdad has the capacity to supply just nine million cubic metres of drinking water per month compared to 45 million before the Gulf war, Mr. Hassun said.

"The quota for each citizen has therefore fallen from 320 litres to 128 of water a day," he said, adding that the poor state of distribution networks and the lack of the necessary chemicals to treat the water were to blame.

Mr. Hassun said the authorities had been forced to reduce the concentration of chlorine in water to a fifth of its original level.

"Medical centres have reported a large rise in the number of illnesses" arising from the deterioration in the city's sewage treatment, he said.

A shortage of waste disposal lorries means around 21,000 tonnes of refuse piles up every month in the streets of Baghdad, which covers an area of 900 square kilometres.

"For five years Baghdad has seen no repairs. Spare pieces for our sanitary equipment are missing and the lack of foreign currency prevents us from repairing or replacing it," Mr. Hassun complained.

Iraq said meanwhile allied warplanes had brought a petrochemical plant grinding to a halt this month by breaking the sound barrier when policing a no-fly zone in the south of the country.

Shock waves damaged the plant's instruments, the ruling Baath Party newspaper said, quoting an official source from the Iraqi Ministry of Industry and Minerals.

"On April 11... planes of the hated forces of the thirty-state aggression (U.S. and allies) broke the sound barrier over the petrochemical complex," the newspaper said.

The paper said the breaking of the sound barrier was repeated on April 12 over the same complex, close to Iraq's southern city of Basra.

"There was no visible damage but the ensuing vibration affected the equipment and instruments and led to their stoppage," the source told the paper.

U.S., Britain and France, main allies during the 1991 Gulf war, have set up two air-exclusion zones in Iraq — one in the north to protect rebel Kurds and the other in the south to guard dissident Shi'ites.



Rescue teams climb over debris on Thursday at the Alfred P. Murrah building in Oklahoma City (AFP photo)

Oklahoma blast toll rises

(Continued from page 1)

U.S. children that the bombing in no way reflected normal behaviour.

"My message to the children is that this was an evil thing and the people who did it were terribly, horribly wrong," Mr. Clinton said.

"I don't want our children to believe something terrible about life and the future and grown-ups in general because of this awful thing."

Mr. Clinton said the investigation was "moving ahead" and stated that he and his wife, Hillary, would travel to Oklahoma City to attend a special memorial for the victims of the tragedy.

As the death toll climbed, assistant fire chief Jon Hansen raised the possibility of more heartbreak. Mr. Hansen said firefighters have searched through about three quarters of the building, but that the remaining one-quarter included the area of a child-care centre.

The investigation has been surrounded by a whirlwind of rumours, speculation and unconfirmed reports, some of them laying blame on Middle Eastern groups, American right-wing extremists and, in one widely-reported example, drug dealers targeting the office of the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

"We have not ruled out any motive or any avenue of investigation at this point," said Weldon Kennedy, the special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in charge of the probe.

The FBI said Thursday it was seeking two white men for arrest in connection with the bombing.

Other law enforcement sources and several developments suggested, however, that the trail of the killers led not abroad, but to the United States itself.

"This looks less international as we move along and get more information about these two suspects," a law enforcement official said, speaking on condition that he not be named.

The official's remarks came as the Justice Department announced it had freed a Palestinian-American man who was repatriated to Washington from London on Thursday for questioning in connection with the attack.

Middle East groups have already denied any connection to the attack and officials were discouraging pursuit of theorising about Middle East links.

A New York daily reported that federal authorities had identified the two main suspects and linked them to drug trafficking, but a law enforcement official who would not be named

discounted that line of inquiry.

"The drug theory is bogus," he said. "It came from a faulty informant."

CNN television meanwhile reported that investigators had identified the suspects by name and had narrowed their whereabouts to a particular region.

The bombing Wednesday was the deadliest attack of its kind ever in the United States, surpassing an incident in 1927 when a man blew up a school, killing 45 people including 38 children.

It wrought devastation spanning several blocks of central Oklahoma City, damaging around 75 neighbouring buildings as well, officials said.

The FBI said investigators were analysing a film from a surveillance camera at a nearby building. However, it said the film was damaged, and added that it did not know if it contained anything significant.

The painstaking search for bodies continued at the wreckage of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building and concern rose about what would be found when searchers entered the area of the child-care centre.

So far, authorities have identified 12 children among the dead. It is not clear how many children were in the centre, or whether the dozen found so far were among them or were elsewhere in the building.

The director of the centre, Melva Noakes, said there were never more than 30 children enrolled there, and at least six are known to have been absent on Wednesday when the bomb went off.

As the search for bodies slowly progressed, investigators fanned out in a wide manhunt for the two suspects described by the FBI. The agency issued drawings of them Thursday, which suggested that a tattoo and a crew cut were about all that distinguished them from countless other medium-build white men. They were believed to have rented the truck that carried the half-tonne homemade bomb, FBI agent Kennedy said.

Their identities — and their motive — were unknown, Mr. Kennedy said. He speculated they may have wanted "some revenge on the federal government as an entity or one of the agencies housed in that building."

U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno announced a \$2 million reward for information leading to arrests in the case.

An axle thought to have come from the vehicle was found about two blocks away, according to a police source who spoke on condition of anonymity. Major

auto parts are marked with an ID number to thwart thieves.

A federal law enforcement official who spoke on condition of anonymity said investigators believe the truck was rented in Kansas.

Dave Russell, a Ryder truck rental official, said the FBI contacted his company about a truck rented from Elliott's body shop in Junction City, Kansas, about 430 kilometres from Oklahoma City. Mr. Russell said he could not comment further.

A law enforcement source in New York told the Associated Press that one suspect is Asad R. Siddiqi, a cab driver from the New York City Borough of Queens, who arrived in Oklahoma City about an hour before the blast.

The FBI, federal firearms agents and Dallas police took a calendar, address book and bag containing clothes from an apartment building Wednesday night, according to a search warrant provided by a man who identified himself as Mr. Siddiqi's brother.

The man said he was questioned by the FBI. He denied that he or his brother had anything to do with the bombing. He would not provide personal information about their occupation or nationality.

ABC News and a former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) official insisted Friday officials know the names of the two suspects.

In addition, both ABC and New York Newsday newspaper said the two suspects were tied to a drug investigation.

Vincent Cannistraro, a former chief of CIA counterterrorism operations, said on ABC that there could be arrests by the end of the day.

"They already know their identities and I think they have a fair idea of where they are located. So I think a major part of the investigation itself is over," Mr. Cannistraro said, citing unspecified "source information."

He said the FBI's reason for identifying the men initially as "John Does" may have been to avoid tipping them off about how close they may be to arrest. ABC added that the two bore a "remarkable resemblance" to men who had been under investigation by the Drug Enforcement Agency.

The FBI sketches of the two called them both John Doe, a law enforcement practice for a person whose identity is unknown.

The founder of the white supremacist, segregationist Nationalist Movement, Richard Barrett of Learned, Mississippi, said Friday federal agents had questioned a former member of his group about the sketches.

Draft self-rule accord ready

(Continued from page 1)

newspaper and confiscated plates of what would have been Saturday's edition.

Owner Adnan Al Khatib said they showed him a warrant from the Palestinian Authority.

"I hope it's the last time they try ideological terrorism," he said, adding that he would still try to bring out the paper.

The publication of such a newspaper would be proof that democracy reigns in the Gaza Strip," he said.

Al Umma supports Ahmad Jibril's hardline Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and has launched scathing attacks on Mr. Arafat.

However, preventive security chief Jibril Rajub, who is based in Jericho, denied his men were involved. "They are free to publish the newspaper when they want," he said.

Israel has not officially granted the Palestinian police any jurisdiction outside the autonomous areas, but Colonel Rajub's men roam across the occupied West Bank regardless.

In Cairo, on Wednesday, Palestinians, looking into the Israeli economy for a quarter of a century, signed an agreement with Egypt to stimulate trade and give Palestinian goods access to world markets.

Egyptian Economy and Trade Minister Mohammad Mahmoud Qouriea, who holds the economy portfolio in the Palestinian Authority, headed their delegations at the meeting.

According to the agreement, Egypt and the Palestinians agreed to preferential trade status for some goods.

It stipulated practical steps to facilitate trade between Egypt and the Palestinian authority, such as setting up a free zone for transit and easing border restrictions, certificate of origin procedures and the use of Egyptian ports and airports.

On the sidelines, representatives of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority met for two days on integrating their economies after Middle East peace and lifting restrictions to trade between them.

Also present at the meeting of REDWIG — the Regional Economic Development Working Group of the Middle East — were U.S. and European Union representatives.

"We were discussing the various measures that we could take in the area, first of all to promote and facilitate access from ourselves and vis-a-vis access to the American market," Israeli representatives Dan Catarivas said at the end of the meeting.

The multilateral talks were also devoted to a plan of action to set up an information super highway, he added.

Under the Egyptian-Palestinian trade pact, both sides agreed to press Israel to lift restrictions it still imposes on the crossing points between Egypt and the Gaza Strip so as to facilitate the flow of trade.

Egyptair ferries Libyans

(Continued from page 1)

Mecca on board Egyptian planes," Col. Qadhafi said.

"We have never asked Arab countries to send commercial flights to Libya to allow them to discover for themselves that the (U.N. embargo) was aimed at destroying the Arab people," Col. Qadhafi added.

He pledged: "Whether they respect the embargo until judgement day, we will go every year by plane to Mecca."

State Department officials in Washington said the United States would ask Saudi Arabia to explain why it allowed the plane to land at Jeddah and return to Tripoli on Thursday instead of impounding the aircraft.

Prince Ahmad Ben Abdul Aziz, the deputy interior minister, did not respond directly to the criticism but said: "Saudi Arabia prevents no Muslim from going to Mecca to perform the rites."

"We welcome all of the faithful on the pilgrimage on condition that they have entry visas and conform to the rules," he said in an interview.

Privately, senior officials in Riyadh said the government decided to separate politics and religious affairs after learning from the experience of hosting Iranian pilgrims who had held political rallies in Mecca.

The official Saudi Press Agency issued its customary warning to visitors on Thurs-

NEWS IN BRIEF

Amnesty protests decapitations in S. Arabia

LONDON (AFP) — At least 90 people have been decapitated in Saudi Arabia in the past three months, a record seen as an "alarming" increase in Islamic form of punishment, Amnesty International said Friday. The London-based rights group called on its members and supporters to write to Saudi royal family members and Saudi diplomatic missions "expressing grave concern about the alarming increase in the number of executions in Saudi Arabia and calling for a halt to such executions." "Executions are carried out after trials in which internationally agreed safeguards for prisoners facing the death sentences are completely ignored." Most of the 90 executions cited between Jan. 20 and April 19 were for murder or drug crimes, it said. But one woman was decapitated for "sexual offences and chewing qat," a narcotic plant leaf.

1 dead in Istanbul carbomb blast

ISTANBUL (AFP) — One person was killed Friday when a bomb planted in an abandoned car in Istanbul went off as the vehicle was being towed into a police lot, Anatolia news agency said. The dead person was the driver of the tow-truck, the report said. There were conflicting reports on the car's initial location before police called in towers to remove the vehicle. Anatolia said it was badly parked in the Sultanahmet neighbourhood, a tourist district where Topkapi palace and the church of Saint Sophia are located. The district has been the target to attacks in recent years by the main Kurdish rebel group, the Kurdish Labour Party. But a centre-left paper, the daily Cumhuriyet, said the booby-trapped car had been parked only five metres outside the main entrance to its offices. Cumhuriyet said this was not in Sultanahmet square — as Anatolia reported — but two to three kilometres away.

Uganda expels 11 Sudanese diplomats

KAMPALA (AFP) — Uganda announced Friday that it had ordered 11 Sudanese diplomats to leave the country in order to cut Sudan's mission here to the same size as the Ugandan embassy in Khartoum. The move will reduce the number of Sudanese diplomats in Kampala to five, a foreign ministry statement said. Embassy First Secretary Hassan Mohammad, military attaché Lieutenant Colonel Hayder Hadi and two other senior diplomats were given 48 hours to leave Uganda. The other diplomats were given up to two weeks to leave, the statement said. Last week Uganda expelled another Sudanese diplomat, Awad Mohammad Hussein, accusing him of engaging in activities incompatible with his diplomatic status. Sudan retaliated by expelling Geoffrey Kabushenge, an advisor at the Ugandan embassy in Khartoum. The two countries accuse each other of backing rebel groups in each other's territory.

Syrian foreign minister to visit Japan

TOKYO (AFP) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa will visit Japan on Saturday and Sunday for talks with Japanese Foreign Minister Yohsei Kono, ministry officials said. Mr. Sharaa will stop by here on his way to Indonesia after attending the conference on reviewing the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in New York. He will attend a meeting of non-aligned countries in Indonesia.

Sudan refuses to renew visas of missionaries

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan's government has refused to renew the visa of a Roman Catholic priest who worked in the country for more than 40 years, forcing him to leave, church officials announced Friday. Father Ottorino Sina, 80, and a member of the Italian Comboni missionary order, was scheduled to leave Friday, a statement from the order in Rome said. He had worked in Sudan from 1947 to 1969 and again starting in 1976. Two other priests of the Comboni order, Father Calvisi Carmine and Father Cazzaniga Francesco, and an unnamed Indian priest of the Salesian order have been told to leave by next Wednesday, said the statement, faxed to the Associated Press. It said Father Sina had previously been granted a "special visa status" because he was director of the Comboni College in the Sudanese capital Khartoum. No reason was given for the expulsions.

Norway closing probe in Rushdie case

OSLO (R) — Norwegian police are closing their inquiry into the shooting of Salman Rushdie's publisher after failing to find conclusive evidence of a link to Iran's death edict on the British author, police said on Friday. The decision to discontinue the investigation drew protests from the Norwegian publishers' association and publisher William Nygaard, who was shot three times from behind and wounded outside his Oslo home in October 1993. Iran has denied any involvement in the attack on Mr. Nygaard, head of Oslo publishers Aschehoug which issued Mr. Rushdie's controversial book "The Satanic Verses" in Norwegian. "We are about to close the investigation," Oslo assistant police chief Sveinung Sponheim told Reuters. "We have not had any new leads since last autumn."

Suspect held

(Continued from page 1)

Another spokesman for the group, Bernard Fulayter, said he had no knowledge of a bomb attack by any members of the group. "We're not an offensive organisation or a terrorist organisation."

Federal agents armed with automatic weapons, helmets and shields were seen on television surrounding the house. The Michigan Militia has vowed to resist what it calls a plot by the U.S. government and the United Nations to set up a police state in the United States.

Sources said the suspect arrested in Oklahoma resembled a sketch of a crew-cut white man who was identified on Thursday as one of two suspects in the bombing. The source said the man was arrested without resistance.

Also sought were brothers named Terry Lynn Nichols and James Douglas Nichols.

Earl Hicks, city administrator in Perry, said law enforcement officials were securing the area around the Noble County courthouse, "which is where they'll be bringing him in this afternoon."

Jordanian unit to be cut

(Continued from page 1)

via and Croatia in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 791. According to Maj.-Gen. Radwan council Resolution 981 calls for re-

ducing the U.N. troops to 5,000.

The mandate of the U.N. peacekeepers is valid for a specific period of time contingent on the approval of the host country.

Steady improvement at Amman Financial Market

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prices and turnover at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) improved last week as the banking and industrial sectors saw hectic activity related to an increase in the capital of the banks and expectations that the international sanctions against Iraq could be lifted before the end of the year, brokers said Friday.

They said that in the banking sector major players in the market were adopting positions ahead of possible mergers of some commercial banks in order to meet a directive by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) that all Jordanian banks raise their capital of JD 20 million before the end of 1996.

In the industrial sector, the move by the U.N. Security Council to allow Iraq to export oil worth \$1 billion every three months was interpreted by the major players as a sign that the sanctions against the Kingdom's one-time largest trading partner could be removed altogether by the end of the year.

Some speculators also believed that Iraq, whose cabinet has turned down the U.N. offer, has not said its last word on the issue since

the Iraqi parliament is now debating the limited oil sale plan, brokers said.

The weekly report of the market said turnover rose by more than nine per cent to JD 21.5 million from the previous week's JD 19.7 million.

The general share price index closed at 148.92 points, up 3.1 points or 2.1 per cent, from the week's opening of 145.8 points.

Industrial stock gained 3.4 per cent during the week, commercial banks 1.7 per cent, service sector shares 0.7 per cent and insurance companies 0.3 per cent, the separate sectoral indices showed.

The report said 7.5 million shares changed hands under 8,051 deals — an indication high-level individual activity in the market.

Service sector shares, boosted by continued activities in transfer of ownership of the Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel, accounted for nearly half the weekly volume with JD 9.2 million.

Commercial banks and financial institutions came second in sectoral trading with a volume of JD 8.4 million, followed by industrial stocks with 3.5 million dinars and insurance companies with JD 400,000.

Of the 84 companies whose

shares were traded during the week, 55 closed with gains, 16 with losses and the rest remained unchanged.

Brokers attributed the steady improvement in the performance of the market to signs that institutions were determined to play a key role against depression of prices.

In the banking sector, notable gains were made by the Bank of Jordan whose shares opened at JD 3.55 and closed at JD 3.85, the Housing Bank whose stock gained 580 fils during the week, the Jordan Islamic Bank (150 fils), the Jordan Investment and Finance Bank (290 fils), Beit Al Mal Saving and Investment for Housing (470 fils), and the Philadelphia Investment Bank (280 fils).

Brokers said several individual investors in the market hold shares in some of the smaller banks seen as heading for merger to raise their capital as directed by the Central Bank and they were consolidating their positions ahead of a possible decision on mergers. That accounted for the increase in prices as well as turnover in the banking sector, they said.

In the services sector, the Irbid District Electricity Company gained 270 fils on news that the government

(Continued on page 9)

Foreign investment in developing countries down

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Private capital flows to developing countries, which took off in 1993, will be down for a second consecutive year in 1995 and has come to a virtual standstill in Latin America, according to a study released Thursday.

Foreign investment in the less developed countries is expected to total \$81.9 billion this year, less than half last year, according to the Institute for International Finance (IFI), a lobbying group for commercial banks.

The Asia-Pacific region is expected to attract no more than \$60 billion in foreign investment, compared to \$80.4 billion last year. Central and eastern Europe are expected to get \$10.5 billion, compared to \$12.7 billion in private investment last year.

Public financing for those areas will rise spectacularly, up 38 per cent this year compared to a nine per cent increase last year, according to IFI. The reversal reflects aid programme for Mexico and Russia.

To avert a repeat of debacles like the Mexican crisis last winter, the IFI called on the international community to mobilise and put in place an early warning system.

Such a system would put the emphasis on reducing im-

balances and strengthening developing economies while enabling governments, investors and multilateral organisations to anticipate and respond to new crises.

The IFI detailed its proposals in a letter to world finance ministers participating in the spring meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank next week in Washington.

An early warning system "must incorporate actions by all major participants and revolve around greater transparency and more disciplined approaches to maintaining sound policies."

It calls on the developing countries to establish monitoring arrangements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), even when they have no loans from the organisation, and assuring greater transparency of their economic data.

The IFI also cautioned the developing countries against relying excessively on short-term capital flows and urged them to encourage savings, strengthen their banking systems and avail themselves of international loans to strengthen their economic structures.

"The IMF needs to make crisis avoidance a clear priority and shape its policies accordingly," the IFI said.

Bonn, Tokyo pressure U.S. not to allow dollar to sink

FRANKFURT (AFP) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl punched through diplomatic language to tell U.S. President Bill Clinton bluntly to put the U.S. economy in order in outspoken remarks four days before a Group of Seven (G-7) meeting on currency instability.

Echoing an attack on U.S. budget policy by Japanese officials this week, and reflecting warnings by leading German industrialists that the rise of the mark could price German products out of world market, Mr. Kohl said that Mr. Clinton should not allow the dollar "to sink."

In exceptionally outspoken terms he said in an interview on German television late Thursday that U.S. fiscal and budgetary policies "are not acceptable" and that the United States had to control its budget deficit.

But his economy minister, Guenter Rexrodt, took a different line Friday saying that the strength of the mark should not be "over-dramatised" and that the benefits in containing the prices of imported goods should not be under-estimated.

Mr. Kohl heads the conservative CDU-CSU parties in coalition with the small, free-market Liberal Party to which Mr. Rexrodt belongs.

Finance ministers and central bankers from the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries are to meet in Washington Tuesday and the severe fall of the dollar, particularly against the mark and yen, is expected to be at the centre of discussion.

Finance Minister Theo Waigel, speaking Friday said that "each state contributes to the stability of its currency through its budgetary policy." "The Europeans must continue their policy of consolidation, Japan must open its markets, deregulate and strengthen domestic demand, the United States and Canada must reduce their deficits."

The dollar has fallen by 11 per cent against the mark so far this year. German industrialists, and particularly the heads of the Daimler-Benz group and of its subsidiary, the aero company DASA, have warned that the strength of the mark, particularly against the dollar, would have grave consequences for German manufacturing if it persists.

DASA said Wednesday that it would report a loss this year of at least 100 million marks (\$71.9 million) if the dollar did not settle at more than 1.60 marks.

Late Thursday the president of the Bundesbank, Hans Tietmeyer, referring to the G-7 meeting, said that

there was "no instant solution" to instability on foreign exchange markets.

Countries with weak currencies had a duty to establish "credible and concrete solutions" to deal with their economic problems. This was particularly true of countries of which the currencies were used in a reserve role, Mr. Tietmeyer said in a reference to the dollar.

German authorities maintain that they have done all in their power to restrain the fall of the dollar by reducing the German discount rate by half a point to 4.0 per cent on March 30.

Germans hold that the duty now lies with the United States to reduce its budget deficit, which is widely regarded as one of the main causes of the fall of the dollar, and with Japan to facilitate access to the Japanese market in order to reduce the Japanese trade surplus with the United States.

One analyst commented: "There is not much that Germany can do."

The Bundesbank, which is always careful to stress that its management of monetary policy depends on strictly domestic factors, justified its decision to reduce the discount rate by pointing to a sharp slowing of the rate of growth of the M3 money supply.

It also noted that the rise of the mark would help to contain inflation in Germany by bearing down on the price of imported goods and services.

The record reached by the dollar was 1.3450 on March 8. In London Friday the dollar was being traded at close to 1.39 marks because dealers

and investors were buying dollars to protect themselves against any initiative which might be agreed by the G-7. Throughout January the dollar had been traded at about 1.55 marks.

In Tokyo, Japan, choked by the soaring yen, wants the G-7 finance ministers at their meeting in Washington on Tuesday to send a strong signal to calm volatile markets, arguing that Tokyo has already done everything it can.

Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura told journalists Friday that he hoped discussions would centre on "what the international community needs to do to attain a strong dollar."

All the G-7 nations — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — agree that existing exchange rates do not reflect economic fundamentals, a senior finance ministry official told AFP.

"The important thing is to send a message expressing our strong stance on the present situation on the foreign exchange markets," he said. The form of the message still had to be worked out, he said.

Foreign diplomats in Tokyo said Japan wants to avoid any direct confrontation with Washington and wants to transform the problem of the strong yen into one of a weak dollar, with major consequences for all G-7 countries.

After reducing its own discount rate last week, Japan feels it now has the right to expect Washington to do the opposite and increase its rates.

Egypt holds down spending, lets budget deficit rise

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Egyptian government, in its draft budget for the fiscal year 1995/6, has held spending increases down to below the rate of inflation but allowed the deficit to grow slightly faster.

The draft, which parliament started debating Monday, foresees a deficit of 5,297 billion pounds (\$1.56 billion), 15 per cent more than the 4,605 billion (\$1.35 billion) deficit in the current year. The fiscal year begins on July 1.

Inflation has been running at between 10 and 12 per cent, with government ministers saying the lower figure is closer to the real underlying rate.

The budget forecasts overall expenditure at 71,492 billion pounds (\$21.0 billion) 1995/6, 9.9 per cent up on 65,048 billion (\$19.1 billion) in the latest version of this year's.

Revenues come to 66,196 billion pounds (\$19.5 billion), 9.5 per cent up on 60,443 billion (\$17.8 billion).

But the government's wage bill, a source of concern to international institutions like the IMF, is projected to rise 16 per cent to reach 15,721

billion pounds (\$4.62 billion). Food subsidies, however, one of the keys to preventing unrest among the urban poor, will remain unchanged at 2.08 billion pounds (\$600 million) — a decline in real terms.

The government finances the deficit largely from short-term treasury bills and Finance Minister Mohammad El-Razaz told parliament earlier this month that the government "had not relied on printing banknotes" since 1991.

It has just invited subscriptions to a first tranche of five-year bonds worth three billion pounds (\$885 million), at a fixed interest rate of 12 per cent.

As a proportion of the total budget, the deficit next year will be slightly higher than it was this year, at 7.4 per cent against 7.0 per cent.

U.S. grants \$200m to renovate Egypt's electric

The United States has agreed to provide up to \$200 million in aid to Egypt to modernise its electricity network, the U.S. Agency for International Development

(USAID) said

USAID Director John Wesley and Egyptian Electricity Minister Mohammad Maher Abaza signed the agreement Sunday to provide up to \$50 million per year for the next four years, a member of the USAID power and telecommunications division, John Hunt, told AFP.

He added that Egyptian International Cooperation Minister Youssef Boutros-Ghali and U.S. Ambassador to Egypt Edward Walker had first concluded the agreement in September and the first monies were already being distributed.

The grant will be used to modernise the electrical control station at the High Dam as well as build two new control stations in the southern Egyptian province of Minya and near the northern town of Damamur.

The money will also go to building a transmission substation at Wadi Natrun, 110 kilometres northwest of Cairo, to support desert land reclamation, Mr. Hunt said.

USAID will provide technical assistance to promote reform in electricity management, particularly in pricing.

Ministers from CFA zone hail post — devaluation growth

PARIS (R) — Finance ministers from the 14 African nations of the franc zone said in Paris Thursday they were optimistic about prospects for economic growth in the wake of last year's drastic devaluation of the CFA franc.

In a joint statement with French Economy Minister Edmond Alphandery, who hosted the meeting with Paris's former African colonies, they said: "Just over a year after the devaluation of the CFA and Comoros francs, the ministers drew an encouraging picture of the economic and financial situation."

Malian Finance Minister Soumaila Cisse told a news conference the gains were not just in terms of state finances and economic indicators but also on the ground, particularly in the countryside, whose produce could now compete with imports.

"There have been difficulties in the towns... but there has been a very positive effect on rural populations," he said.

The CFA franc's value against the French franc was cut by half in January 1994 under pressure from the International Monetary Fund

(IMF) to break a 46-year-old fixed parity. The Comoros Islands' franc was devalued by a third.

After a period of stagnation and decline, with the economies of the zone shrinking on average by 0.8 per cent from 1990 to 1993, including as much as six per cent for Cameroon, overall growth returned last year, ministers said.

On average zone economies grew 1.5 per cent in 1994, Mr. Alphandery said, rising to three or four per cent this year and four or five per cent in 1996 — the sort of level seen in the highly dynamic economies of Asia. Ivory Coast's economy could grow by six per cent next year, he added.

France, which precipitated the currency shift by making its aid contingent on countries winning the backing of the devaluation-bent IMF, says it is pleased with the results.

"The devaluation now seems to be a success, an incontrovertible success," Mr. Alphandery told a news conference. "All the economic indicators show that."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY APRIL 22, 1995

By Thomas S. Plerson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is a good day today to talk with family ties and find out how the relationships can be improved so that everyone can be happy.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Today is good for making as many visits as you can and get the right results. Friends can provide very interesting moments.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Plan how to become more affluent today and pay your financial obligations more promptly so that your credit is improved.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) This is a good day today to make plans for later tonight, but avoid any tense situations outdoors. Later be with good friends.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Take time to go over your plans today and make sure they are correct so that you can gain your aims wisely.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) If you apply your best effort today, you can gain personal and intimate longings very quickly. Spend wisely not extravagantly.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Contact the most powerful bigwig you know and state your capabilities and gain the support you need and want. Be yourself.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Go ahead and plan that trip which could easily help you to expand in business today, but count the cost well.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get into the privacy of your study and think over how best to improve your business dealing for later tonight.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Realise that your fellow associates are not as business like and unemotional as you and you can then cement better relations.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You have many duties ahead of you today, but if you schedule them well, you need not feel so confused.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Early this morning get in touch with good friends and set up appointments for entertainments and recreational activities for later tonight.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

THE Daily Crossword by Don Johnson

ACROSS

- Author Kingsley
- Orion only
- Yocogan
- Take a breather
- Leave in a hurry
- Unit of pressure
- Part of the U.S. - Canada border
- Heat frost
- Larger than standard
- Teaser
- Across Sue - Langston
- Lunar city
- Have a great emotion
- NBA member
- Unknown fellow
- Amo, - amos
- Campfire fuel
- Judicial proceedings
- Actor Charley
- Portion
- Constitution material
- Part of 17A
- Very fast
- Weather forecast
- Greek letter
- Steve
- Characterized by mockery
- Stadium sounds
- Town in Oregon
- Poker ace
- Pragmatic
- French river
- Practical joke
- Some up - in the bag
- French river
- Host
- Shredding fishes
- Clark Kent's love
- Unbearable one
- Quinted
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Farmers complain of low produce prices

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura's visit to Jordan has been a source of disappointment for many farmers. They complain that the government is not doing enough to protect them from low produce prices. The government has been trying to encourage farmers to produce more, but the prices are still low. The government has been trying to encourage farmers to produce more, but the prices are still low. The government has been trying to encourage farmers to produce more, but the prices are still low.

Steady improvement at Amman Financial Market

(Continued from page 8)

would allow a free-market approach to electricity generation, and the Jordan National Shipping Lines gathered 300 files after announcing year-end figures. In industries, where hopes of an end to the sanctions against Iraq are translated into increased Jordanian exports to Iraq, the weekly performance was largely mixed, but high optimism was visible that local firms would see increased activity vis-a-vis Iraq next year, brokers said.

"Major players decided that it was better to adopt positions right now rather than wait for December, which they see as a logical deadline for and to the sanctions," said a broker, who, like other AFM dealers, cannot be identified by name under standing regulations.

"Furthermore, there are some investors who simply refuse to accept that Baghdad has issued its last word on the oil plan," added the broker. "They cite the continuing debate of the plan by the Iraqi parliament as a sign that Baghdad has kept the door open to accept the U.N. plan after modifications."

After announcing better annual results for 1994, the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company gained 290 files and the Arab Potash Company (new issue) gathered 900 files last week.

Other notable gains in industries were made by the Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing (190 files), the Intermediate Petrochemicals (620 files), the National Cable and Wire Manufacturing (250 files), and Jordan Sulpho Chemicals (210 files).

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET									
HOUSING BANK OFFER - AMMAN - JERUSALEM									
TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663170									
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (15/04/1995 - 19/04/1995)									
WEEKLY REPORT									
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	WOOLEN INDUSTRIES	1,335	1.780	1.780	1.780
ARAB BANK PTC	429,226	191.750	191.750	191.500	THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	10,122	3.600	3.600	3.660
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	501,479	4.890	4.890	4.800	THE JORDAN WOOLSTED MILLS	19,550	8.200	8.200	8.250
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	54,848	4.750	4.750	4.660	ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	330,329	4.020	4.020	4.210
BANK OF JORDAN	29,876	3.550	3.550	3.850	JORDAN BANK	4,625	2.460	2.460	2.500
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	148,481	1.600	1.600	1.550	JORDAN PRINTING & PACKING	1,920	5.000	5.000	5.000
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	56,953	2.780	2.780	2.870	THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	11,291	2.700	2.700	2.750
THE HOUSING BANK	1,975,376	7.580	7.580	8.160	THE PUBLIC MINING	2,198	2.850	2.850	2.930
JORDAN KUNAT BANK	88,444	2.920	2.920	3.000	SPINNING & WEAVING	102,568	2.670	2.670	2.580
JORDAN GULF BANK	233,950	1.370	1.370	1.450	RAFIA INDUSTRIES	25,675	2.480	2.480	2.550
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	22,225	3.500	3.500	3.500	DAR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	138,528	7.950	7.950	7.950
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	1,180,608	3.820	3.820	4.070	ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	239,591	0.920	0.920	0.920
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	9,096	4.800	4.800	4.720	ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	54,697	7.250	7.250	7.200
BUSINESS BANK	59,871	3.520	3.520	3.890	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	145,014	0.670	0.670	0.700
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	39,633	3.970	3.970	4.360	GENERAL INVESTMENT	7,700	3.100	3.100	3.100
BEIT KHALAL SAVING/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	36,023	3.100	3.100	3.570	ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	464,703	1.570	1.570	1.600
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	866,936	1.230	1.230	1.340	NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	10,223	3.100	3.100	3.200
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	4,997	4.000	4.000	4.100	INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	335,751	2.530	2.530	3.150
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	2,678,991	1.770	1.770	2.050	JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	17,912	1.190	1.190	1.200
BANKS SECTOR					UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	5,921	4.200	4.200	4.200
					ALADDIN INDUSTRIES	5,290	4.350	4.350	4.250
					JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JINCO	9,441	0.670	0.670	0.690
					JORDAN WOOD INDUSTRIES / JWICO	4,815	5.600	5.600	5.350
					NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	41,975	4.700	4.700	4.950
					JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	45,461	1.610	1.610	1.820
					ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	63,159	2.280	2.280	2.420
					KANTHER INVESTMENT	9,781	1.580	1.580	1.800
					UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	76,187	3.460	3.460	3.650
					JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	53,992	1.990	1.990	2.040
					INDUSTRIAL SECTOR				
					2828855 INDEX NUMBER: 124.97				
					CHANGE +3.39%				
INSURANCE SECTOR					19305961 INDEX NUMBER: 148.92				
					CHANGE				
					134.60 INDEX NUMBER: 134.60				
					CHANGE +0.29%				
					PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (15/04/1995 - 19/04/1995)				
					WEEKLY REPORT				
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CENTRAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE	22,463	0.910	0.910	0.880
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	95,049	1.650	1.650	1.680	JORDAN TRADE FACILITIES	180,534	0.770	0.770	0.850
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	282,169	1.550	1.550	1.580	BARA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	19,465	1.390	1.390	1.390
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	6,205,462	7.200	7.200	7.300	UNIFIED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	569,978	2.240	2.240	2.400
JORDAN DISTRICT ELECTRICITY	2,777	1.040	1.040	1.310	ARAB PTD INV.CO	776,454	1.130	1.130	1.220
JORDAN MINER MINERAL	1,697	2.750	2.750	2.610	ARAB FOOD & MEDICAL APPLIANCES	5,421	1.020	1.020	1.020
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	109,852	7.150	7.150	6.950	NATIONAL CHLORINE INDUSTRIES CO.LTD	117,815	1.650	1.650	1.740
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL HOTELS / NEW	2,662	7.000	7.000	7.050	NATIONAL TEXTILE & PLASTICS IND. CO	28,491	1.080	1.080	1.120
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	296,046	2.960	2.960	3.260	JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	47,305	1.730	1.730	1.760
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	75,234	2.260	2.260	2.420	EL-KAT READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	68,294	2.260	2.260	2.230
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	3,582	1.100	1.100	1.150	INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	331,740	1.560	1.560	1.660
MACHINERY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	3,461	0.660	0.660	0.690	UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY	3,922	2.500	2.500	2.530
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALBA I	11,136	10.250	10.250	10.150	JORDAN STEEL	25,247	0.990	0.990	0.990
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & CONDOCORE HOTELS	534,389	2.730	2.730	2.700	ARAB ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES	2,016	0.910	0.910	0.900
ARAB ENTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	49,192	3.350	3.350	3.350	GRAND TOTAL 2209255				
JORDANIAN EXPATRIATES INVESTMENT HOLDING	3,138	1.250	1.250	1.280					
SERVICES SECTOR					7656242 INDEX NUMBER: 141.99				
					CHANGE +0.72%				
					ATTACHEE CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING				
					THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES				
					JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES				
					THE ARAB POTASH/NEW				
					JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY				

European Cup Winners Cup

Arsenal win on penalties to meet Real Zaragoza in final

LONDON (AP) — David Seaman made three saves in a penalty shootout as defending champion Arsenal made it to the European Cup Winners Cup final again Thursday despite losing 3-1 to Sampdoria.

The Gunners will meet Real Zaragoza in the final in Paris May 10, the Spanish team advancing 4-3 on aggregate despite losing 3-1 to Chelsea in the other semifinal in London.

With Sampdoria and Arsenal level on aggregate at 5-5 after extra time, the place in the final depended on penalties.

Although Ricardo Maspero and Mereno Mannini beat the England goalkeeper from the spot, he saved from Sinisa Mihajlovic, Vladimir Jugovic and Atilio Lombardo.

Lombardo's kick, the final one of the shootout, appeared to have beaten Sea-

man but he stuck out his arm and palmed it away.

Sampdoria keeper Walter Zenga saved from Paul Merson and Eddie McGoldrick shot too high. But Arsenal's Lee Dixon, John Hartson and captain Tony Adams scored from the spot.

Coincidentally the shootout scoreline was 3-2, the same as each leg of the semifinal.

Roberto Mancini gave Sampdoria a 13th minute lead only for Ian Wright to level in the 60th with his ninth goal in eight Cup Winners games this season to restore Arsenal's overall lead.

The Italian club sent on Claudio Belluci as substitute and he responded with two goals in the 83rd and 85th minute to give Sampdoria the edge.

But Swedish World Cup player fired a 30-yard free kick home two minutes from

the end of regulation time for 3-2 to push the game into extra time.

In London, Paul Furlong scored a bizarre goal to give Chelsea the lead after 30 minutes. An attempted clearance by Real Zaragoza goalkeeper Juan Miguel Garcia struck Furlong and the ball flew past the startled Garcia into the net.

Zaragoza tied the game in the 54th minute with a sparkling run past several Chelsea defenders. But Frank Sinclair made it 2-1 for the Londoners in the 62nd and the third, from Mark Stein, was two minutes from the end.

Player-manager Glenn Hoddle, Stein and Gavin Peacock all had shots blocked before Hoddle's second attempt was deflected over the bar as Chelsea went close several more times.

The more prestigious Champions Cup final will be between five-time winner AC

Milan and three-time titlist Ajax of Amsterdam in Vienna May 24 and two more Italian clubs, Juventus and Parma, will contest the two-legged UEFA Cup final May 3 and 17.

Milan gained the Champions Cup final by downing Paris Saint German 2-0 Wednesday to complete a 3-0 aggregate triumph over the two legs while Ajax romped to a 5-2 victory over Bayern Munich after a goal-less first leg.

Juventus, which leads the Italian League standings by 11 points, and Parma both eliminated German clubs in the UEFA Cup semifinals.

Juventus scored a 2-1 victory at Borussia Dortmund to advance 4-3 overall, and Parma downed Bayer Leverkusen 3-0 to score a 5-1 aggregate victory.

Wihdat, Jazireh advance to final

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Wihdat Friday clinched a place in the final of the Amman Soccer Tournament when they overcame Russeifa 4-2 in a penalty shootout. The match ended in a 1-1 draw with both goals scored in the first half. Al Russeifa took the lead in the final minute of the first half, but a defensive error gave Al Wihdat their equaliser a few seconds later.

Al Wihdat will now meet Al Jazireh in the final match. Al Jazireh had eliminated Al Faisali 4-1 in the other semifinal Thursday.

Eight Premier League teams from the capital and its vicinity took part in the competition organised by the Municipality of Greater Amman.

Spurs clinch best record in NBA

DALLAS (R) — David Robinson's San Antonio Spurs clinched the best record in the NBA on Thursday, but it wasn't easy.

Sean Elliott hit a pair of free throws with a half-second left after a controversial foul call and Robinson had 36 points and 13 rebounds as the Spurs secured homecourt advantage throughout the postseason with a 112-111 victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

"I am proud of the Spurs," said San Antonio coach Bob Hill. "This guarantees us the best record in the league. Now the real season begins."

Elliott went up for a shot and it appeared that Jamal Mashburn stripped him cleanly. The clock expired, the buzzer went off and the Mavericks began to celebrate before the foul was called. Elliott made both foul shots and the Mavericks could not get another shot off.

"You can't miss those when that much is on the line," said Elliott. "It was one of our goals to have the best record in the NBA and win the Midwest Division. We have a bigger goal, though — to continue to build on what we have done all year."

"This year I have learned to expect anything," said Dallas coach Dick Motta. "We hung in there and got the lead. We missed two nice layups that could have clinched it when we were up six, but still it comes down to a referee's call."

Robinson was 17-of-24 in 44 minutes. "You can't stop David, you just have to contain him," said Kidd.

Jason Kidd notched his fourth triple-double with 13 assists, a season-high 12 rebounds and 10 points for Dallas. Jamal Mashburn added 22 points.

Avery Johnson had 22 points and 11 assists for the Spurs, who are 19-2 in their last 21 games.

Spurs forward Dennis Rodman played only nine minutes and had four rebounds

while repeatedly refusing to go into the game during the first half. Rodman had his sneakers off during parts of the game while on the bench.

In Seattle, Gary Payton scored 25 points and the Sonics used a 19-3 run spanning the third and fourth quarters to defeat the Houston Rockets 114-97 and move into a tie with the idle Phoenix Suns atop the Pacific Division.

Seattle turned a five-point deficit into a 13-point lead with the run.

Detlef Schrempf added 21 points and Sam Perkins 18 for Seattle, which has won 13 of its last 16 games.

Hakeem Olajuwon scored 26 points for struggling Houston, which has lost back-to-back games and remains a game behind the Lakers for the fifth playoff slot in the west.

In Charlotte, the New York Knicks erased a 12-point fourth-quarter deficit for a sloppy but gutsy 91-86 victory over the Hornets that clinched the second-best record in the Eastern Conference.

John Starks scored 18 points and Charles Smith and Anthony Mason chipped in 15 apiece to lead the Knicks, who played much of the game without starters Patrick Ewing and Derek Harper, who both suffered minor injuries.

New York, which snapped a two-game slide, has won nine of its last 12 games overall. Alonzo Mourning had 22 points and 10 rebounds and Larry Johnson had 18 points for Charlotte.

The loss enabled Indiana to clinch the Central Division title.

Charlotte played without

starting point guard Muggsy Bogues for the second straight game (strained left hamstring).

The Hornets led 76-64 with 8:57 left but the Knicks took a one-point lead with a 15-2 burst over the next 4:43.

In Portland, Rod Strickland scored 19 points and handed out 12 assists as the Trail Blazers clinched the seventh playoff spot in the Western Conference with a 111-97 rout of the Los Angeles Lakers.

Otis Thorpe also scored 19 points and Clifford Robinson added 18 for Portland, which placed seven players in double figures.

Cedric Ceballos scored 25 of his 36 points in the second half for the Lakers.

In Chicago, Scottie Pippen had 20 points and nine assists as the Bulls won their fifth straight, 120-105 over the Detroit Pistons.

Michael Jordan finished with 17 points, eight rebounds and seven assists but shot 8-of-18 from the floor. Jordan has yet to shoot better than 50 per cent from the floor in any game at the United Centre. However, Chicago improved to 12-3 since his return.

Terry Mills led Detroit with 26 points and Grant Hill added 20 and 15 rebounds.

At Golden State, Mitch Richmond scored 30 points as the Sacramento Kings cruised to a 112-98 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Sacramento moved within a game of idle Denver for the Western Conference's final playoff spot.

David Wood led Golden State with 18 points and Clifford Rozier added 15 points and 19 rebounds.

RESULTS

New York	91	Charlotte	86
Chicago	120	Detroit	105
San Antonio	112	Dallas	111
Portland	111	LA Lakers	97
Seattle	111	Houston	101
Sacramento	112	Golden State	98

Chang advances to quarters

HONG KONG (Agencies) — Top seed and defending champion Michael Chang beat German qualifier Alex Radulescu 5-7, 6-3, 6-1 Thursday and advanced to the quarterfinals of the Hong Kong Open.

It was the first time Chang had dropped a set in Hong Kong since 1993.

He was joined in the quarterfinals by third seed and fellow American Jim Courier, last week's Japan Open winner, who defeated American Jonathan Stark 7-5, 6-1.

Chang said he knew little about the Romanian-born Radulescu before the match, and that may have affected him in the first set, when he lost serve in the 11th game.

"But really, it should not take me a whole set to figure out the style of my opponent," said Chang, who is ranked eighth in the world.

In the quarterfinals, Chang meets Denmark's Kenneth Carlsen, who upset seventh-seeded Dutchman Jan Siemerink 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (7-4).

Eighth seed Martin Damm of the Czech Republic also lost, bowing 6-7 (1-7), 6-3, 6-3 to Sweden's Jan Apell.

Courier also struggled in the first set but came through by doggedly holding serve and winning the big points against Stark.

"I have played doubles with Jon before and have also practiced with him. I can certainly play better than I did in the first set, but I improved as the match went on," Courier said.

Also reaching the quarterfinals was the sixth seed, Russian Alexander Volkov, who beat American wild card Entry Tommy Ho 5-7, 7-5, 6-4.

Medvedev in quarterfinals again

Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine gained his fifth quarterfinal of 1995 by beating Javier Sanchez of Spain, 6-0, 6-3, Thursday at the Nice Open.



Cedric Pioline

Now he hopes to get into a semifinal after losing at the quarterfinal stage in all his previous tournaments this season.

After blanking Sanchez in the first set, Medvedev dropped behind 3-2 in the second before winning four consecutive games.

Ranked 16th in the world after rising as high as fourth

vedev-Fronberg; top-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia against Cedric Pioline of France; Rosset versus Woodford, and Alberto Costa against Tomas Carbonell in a battle of Spaniards.

Shelton, Frana win

In Paget, Bermuda, Vince Spadea, the only seed left in

TENNIS ROUNDUP

in 1994, Medvedev is looking to rebound after injuries slowed him late last year.

"I've rested long enough with my injuries," Medvedev said. "I feel refreshed. I didn't play for a long time and now my confidence is coming back."

Australian Richard Fromberg beat Spain's Alex Corretja, 6-4, 6-3 in his second-round match, and fifth-seeded Marc Rosset of Switzerland eliminated another Spaniard, Roberto Carretero, 6-4, 6-3.

In the final match of the day Mark Woodford of Australia ousted France's Henri Leconte, 6-2, 7-5.

The quarterfinals are Med-

the tournament, beat Karsten Braasch of Germany 6-2, 6-4 to advance to the semifinals of the \$303,000 Bermuda Open.

Also winning quarterfinal matches on the clay courts were Javier Frana, Bryan Shelton and Mauricio Hadad.

Spadea, the No. 5 seed from the United States, recovered after trailing by a break in each set. He next plays Frana in his second semifinal of the year.

"I told myself to stick with it and keep positive," Spadea said. "I was able to keep my level pretty good."

Frana beat No. 2 seed Jason Stoltenberg of Australia 7-6 (7-5), 6-1. The Argen-

tine and Spadea have yet to lose a set this week. This will be Frana's first semifinal of the year.

"I've been playing better and better every day, and today I played great," Frana said. "It was a very high level in the first set, and after the first set I think it was tough for him to win the next two sets."

Shelton of the United States downed Michael Tebbutt of Australia 7-6 (7-1), 1-6, 6-3. In the semis, he meets Hadad, a Colombian who beat Jamie Morgan of Australia 6-4, 7-6 (7-5).

McQuillan, Habsudova clash in Fed Cup

Australia's Rachel McQuillan has drawn Slovak Republic's Karina Habsudova and the home country's Nicole Bradtke meets Radka Zrubakova on the opening day of their Fed Cup tie here Saturday.

The reverse singles and doubles of this group one match will be played Sunday.

Because of their home advantage, Australia are favoured to win the tie.

But Habsudova, Slovakia's number one player, has predicted a tough fight.

She conceded Friday she and Zrubakova were not as accustomed as the Australians to playing on grass, but said she believed the pair would adapt well to the different surface.

"After all, we play at Wimbledon every year, so it is not as we will have to cope with something completely new," she said.

Habsudova, 21, has career wins over 1994 Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez and this year's Australian Open winner, Mary Pierce.

Zrubakova, 24, has beaten many top players, including Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Jana Novotna, Mary Joe Fernandez, Judith Wiesner, Magdalena Maleeva and Helena Sukova.

Previously known as the Federation Cup, the women's tournament has undergone a name abbreviation and the system has changed. The format is now similar to that of the Davis Cup — the men's equivalent competition.

While the Federation Cup was played at one venue over a week the revamped competition is being played over a year in different locations.

Oklahoma bombing grim reminder for Atlanta that it can happen there

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Olympic security training exercise was make-believe, but the officers involved had only to look to Oklahoma City to see what the real thing might look like.

About 100 officers worked on a simulated car bombing and hostage incident at the 1996 Olympic equestrian center on Wednesday, the same day that a car bomb killed at least 36 people and injured hundreds more in the Oklahoma state capital.

"What we kept emphasizing to the people who are doing this now is: Play it for real. Because once it may be," said David W. Johnson, special agent in charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Atlanta office.

Personnel from the FBI's Special Weapons and Tactics department took part,

along with local law enforcement officers, working out of a mobile command center equipped with secure communications and satellite links which will be taken to Atlanta for the 1996 Games.

Johnson said at least two more exercises were planned before the Games July 19-August 4 of next year.

"We don't want anything to happen here," he said. "Hopefully, intelligence and hard work will ensure that it doesn't happen here."

Atlanta organizers were tight-lipped regarding the Oklahoma bombing, though they acknowledged they were monitoring developments in one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in US history.

"Don't draw a relationship between the bombing in Oklahoma City to Olympic Games, be-

cause none exists. Don't get these two mixed up," said Lyn May, a spokeswoman for the centennial Olympic Games' organizers.

But do not doubt security officials here will want to know everything they can about what happened in Oklahoma City.

"We will, of course, request all available information relating to this explosion, study it and consider ways to improve our security if necessary," the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games said in a prepared statement.

Ordinary Americans were stunned that such an attack could occur in the U.S. heartland, but Olympic officials have been aware of the dangers ever since the 1972 Munich Olympic massacre.

Seventeen people, including 11 members of the

Israeli Olympic team, were killed on September 5, 1972, in a 23-hour hostage crisis that started when Arab terrorists broke into the Israeli dormitory at the Olympic Village.

Since then, athlete safety has been a top priority at all Olympics.

In Atlanta, access to training centers, athlete dormitories and competition venues will be controlled with a radio frequency identification system that will read information encoded on accreditation badges.

Security officials will be able to use the system to track the movements of any person wearing an Olympic credential.

As well as the now-standard metal detectors, Atlanta security officials will use palm scanners to screen people entering some Olympic venues.

But people who live and work near the still-under-construction Olympic Stadium look to the horror of Oklahoma City and fear they will be the next terrorist targets in 1996.

"There's evil all over the world. You're not safe anywhere anymore," said Barbara Crawford, who moved to Atlanta four days ago from Oklahoma City.

"It's very frightening. We really are targets, Atlanta resident Annella Clark said.

"This is a wake-up call for Atlanta," said Josette Scott, who works at a clothing store a few blocks from the construction site where Olympic Stadium is taking shape.

The blast in Oklahoma City heightens the tension for everyone, but especially in a place where the attention of the world will be drawn.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Dynamo Dresden bankrupt

DRESDEN (AFP) — Bottom club Dynamo Dresden is on the verge of bankruptcy and threatened with relegation from Germany's top division. Dresden's financial commission meets on Tuesday to decide whether to grant the team money to pay for the required football licence from the German federation. If the commission decide not to lend the money, Dresden are unlikely to be able to afford the licence. Without the licence, Dresden will be automatically relegated.

Brazilian Indians to hold Olympics

BRASILIA (AP) — Pele, secretary of sports Edson Arantes Do Nascimento, announced Thursday that six Indian tribes will take part in Brazil's first indigenous Olympic games next week. The games begin in Campo Grande, capital of the jungle state of Mato Grosso do Sul where 300 members of the Guarani, Guato, Caimas, Terenas, Ofaes and Kadiwesu tribes will compete in a series of events. The three-day "Indian Olympics" include "native" competitions in archery, fishing, swimming and other aquatic games in a river outside the western city of 525,000 people. Tribesmen also will compete in other more "traditional" sports such as soccer, volleyball and the long jump, he said.

Celtics' Douglas fined \$4,000

NEW YORK (R) — Point guard Sherman Douglas of the Boston Celtics was fined \$4,000 for his actions after Monday's game between the Celtics and the New Jersey Nets in Boston, the National Basketball Association said Thursday. Douglas was fined for failing to leave the court in a timely fashion and verbally abusing the referees following Boston's 98-96 defeat of New Jersey.

Giggs out of Welsh squad

CARDIFF (AFP) — Manchester United and Wales star Ryan Giggs was forced to concede defeat to his hamstring injury on Friday and pull out of the Welsh European Championship trip to Germany. Welsh boss Mike Smith, already resigned to not qualifying for

the finals in English next year some of the worst performances witnessed by Welsh fans, has replaced him with Arsenal's young striker John Harrison. Giggs has played in only one of Wales's last four matches after damaging a hamstring in the FA Cup semi-final replay win over Crystal Palace. Harrison, who made his debut in last month's 3-1 defeat in Bulgaria, reverted to the under-21 squad with the return after injury and suspension respectively of Ian Rush and Mark Hughes.

Bukhanov bids for repeat victory

BELGRADE (R) — Three of the top four men from last year's record-breaking Belgrade marathon return on Saturday to compete in the best field in the race's eight-year history. Title holder Vladimir Bukhanov of Ukraine, who took two and a half minutes off the previous record with a winning two hours 12 minutes 27 seconds, is back with the duo who finished second and third — Alexei Kuznetsov of Russia and Zimbabwean Cephas Mafai. Despite proximity to the Bosnia-Herzegovina war zone, a vastly improved entry has been helped by the lifting of the Belgrade airport blockade after two years.

Hoddle ready to quit

LONDON (AFP) — Glenn Hoddle came close to conjuring European miracle for his English Premiership side Chelsea Thursday night — then announced his impending retirement as a player. The 37-year-old player-manager sent himself on to help create three comeback goals his club needed against Real Zaragoza in their European Cup Winners Cup semi-final. But a goal from Santiago Aragon raised the target to five and put the Spaniards through to a Paris final meeting with Arsenal. Hoddle, capped 4 times for England and a star with Tottenham and Monaco, came on after 61 minutes and created a goal for Frank Sinclair within a minute. He then set up Mark Stein's late third goal but despite his obvious enduring class, insisting he is about to retire. "I'll be banging up my boots at the end of the season so it was nice to get on," he said after his team's 3-1 win.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH GOREN SHARE
BY TANNAM HIRSCH
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TAKE THE HIGH ROAD

North-South vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
♠ K 6 2
♥ Q 10 7 3
♦ 7 5 4
♣ 2 3

WEST
♠ A Q 10 9 7 5 3 J 6 4 3
♥ 5
♦ K 10 3
♣ 10 9 7

EAST
♠ Void
♥ A K 9 8 6 4 2
♦ A Q 8
♣ A 2

The bidding:
West 2♣ North 4♠ South 5♣
Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Ten of ♠
Good technicians will go to extremes to keep the danger hand off

lead. South's technique on this hand was exemplary. East took advantage of the vulnerability to boost partner's weak two-suit opening bid to four spades, making it as difficult as possible for the opponents to enter the auction. But South was too strong to be shut out and North, realizing South was bidding under extreme pressure, took no action.

Most declarers would be happy that the contract depended only on one of two finesses and took no further. Since both minor-suit finesses are due to fail, that would result in a one-trick set, with declarer losing two diamonds and a club as long as East did not play the two of diamonds when that suit is first led from dummy. Can you spot the line that offered a better than 75 percent chance?

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OKLAHOMA BLAST: Floodlights illuminate the federal building in Oklahoma City as (right) rescue workers continue searching for bodies in the aftermath of Wednesday's car bomb explosion (see page one (AFP photo))



Jordan, PNA to sign all agreements in two weeks

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) intend to conclude the signing of all agreements on cooperation in various sectors in two weeks, the senior Palestinian diplomat in Jordan said Friday.

Omar Al Khatib, charge d'affaires at the Palestinian embassy in Amman, also said the signing of a Jordan-PNA accord on cooperation in culture and information has been delayed until Wednesday because of technical reasons.

Mr. Khatib told the Jordan Times the agreement on culture and information was supposed to have been signed on Saturday (today) but was deferred because of technicalities related to travel across the King Hussein Bridge.

The draft agreement, Mr. Khatib said, involves exchange of visits by cultural teams from the two sides, Jordanian training for Palestinians and exchange of information and expertise.

"We hope to sign the agreement on Wednesday," Mr. Khatib said, adding that Jordanian Minister of Culture Samir Habashneh and PNA Minister of Culture and Information Yasser Abed Rabbo would sign the accord.

According to Mr. Khatib,

Jordan and the PNA have put finishing touches to draft agreements on economic cooperation, trade, and transport, and these accords would also be signed in the "next two weeks."

"We expect that there will not be any outstanding agreements to be signed at the end of the next two weeks," he said.

These accords are called for in the broad protocol on cooperation that was signed by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, who also heads the PNA, in January.

So far, the two sides have signed agreements in post and communications, education, health, and youth and sports. Outstanding accords cover economic cooperation, trade, transport, banking and monetary affairs, as well as civil affairs.

Mr. Khatib said Abdul Aziz Al Haj Ahmad, the PNA minister of transport, was also due here this week to finalise the agreement on transport. He will be followed by other concerned PNA ministers to finalise and sign other accords.

A seven-member PNA team headed by Mr. Abed Rabbo visited here on Wednesday and put final touches of most of the agreements, but both sides said

after the talks that finalising and signing accords were one thing but implementing them was another.

The reference was mainly to what are reported to be Israeli-imposed restraints on Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation.

"On the one hand are the accords signed and to be signed between Jordan and the PNA, while on the other are those signed by Israel and the PNA," noted an official.

"The problem, as we see it, is mainly because provisions in the Israeli-Palestinian and Jordanian-Palestinian agreement are overlapping," said the official, who preferred anonymity. "Given that Israel continues to retain control over the Palestinian territories, Israel can also indirectly restrict Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation at this point in time."

A draft Jordan-PNA trade accord is seen as a classic example of the difficulties facing the two sides in implementing bilateral agreements.

While the draft accord sets out a broad scope of exchange of goods between Jordan and the Palestinian territories, an Israel-PNA accord on economic cooperation signed in April 1994 restricts the items that Jordan could export to the Palestinian territories.

Gaza pilgrims travel on Palestinian passports

GAZA (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said Friday he was happy Gaza pilgrims were travelling to Mecca for the first time on Palestinian passports.

But he criticised Israel's seizures of travel documents for other Palestinians.

Around 500 Palestinians from the self-ruled Gaza Strip left Gaza for Egypt on Friday on their way to Mecca in Saudi Arabia for the Haj pilgrimage.

"I am very happy that... I had the opportunity to say farewell to our pilgrims who are going to Saudi Arabia for the Haj and I am very happy that they are carrying Palestinian passports for the first time," Mr. Arafat told reporters.

Mr. Arafat's self-rule authority in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank-Jericho enclave began issuing passports to Palestinians in the two self-rule areas earlier this month under the terms of an Israel-PLO interim peace deal.

In the past, most Palestinian pilgrims from the West Bank and Gaza travelled on passports or travel permits issued by Jordan or Egypt.

"I am very sorry that till now the Israeli government is still insisting to confiscate the 4,000 Palestinian passports which will prevent our pilgrimage from (most of) the West Bank... which reflects negatively on the whole peace process," Mr. Arafat said.

Earlier this month, Israel seized 4,080 PLO-issued passports bearing the names of Palestinians in parts of the West Bank still under Israeli occupation, saying the documents were issued in violation of the peace accord.

Mistrial request denied in New York court trial

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Defendants in a New York trial have been tainted by publicity about the Oklahoma City bombing, their lawyers said Thursday in unsuccessfully arguing for a mistrial.

One defence lawyer, John Jacobs, said his own five-year-old son, touched by news of children killed in Wednesday's blast, asked whether his client was responsible.

Mr. Jacobs said he told his child that Mohammad Saleh was innocent. But he was concerned about the effect that photographs of dead Oklahoma children could have on the New York jury.

"I'm concerned about it, too, but if there is any time to measure it, it isn't now," said U.S. District Judge Michael Mukasey.

Mr. Mukasey said he might question jurors before they begin deliberations to make sure they did not see or hear anything that would prevent them from judging fairly. On Wednesday, he told jurors to avoid watching or reading reports of the Oklahoma blast.

Mistrial requests were made by Lynne Stewart, the lawyer for Egyptian Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, and Roger Stavis, lawyer for Al Sayid Nosair, who is accused of launching a holy war in the United States in 1990 by assassinating Rabbi Meir Kahane.

Mr. Stavis made his request after emotional testi-

Iran rejects permanent extension of nuclear pact

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iran's foreign minister, at centre stage of a U.N. conference on nuclear non-proliferation, denounced Washington Friday for trying to disrupt his country's nuclear programme while "turning a blind eye" to Israel's atomic weapons.

Iran will not support indefinite extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as sought by the United States, until this "ever-widening gap between promises and realities" of the treaty is closed, said Ali Akbar Velayati.

The United States, contending Iran plans to produce nuclear weapons, has tried to persuade Russia, China and other nations to cut off nuclear supplies to the Tehran government.

The Iranians, who are obligated as NPT signatories not to develop atomic arms, insist their plans are only for peaceful energy projects. They accuse Washington of violating a treaty provision guaranteeing open access to nuclear energy technology.

Listing this and other treaty "failures," Mr. Velayati said the 25-year-old pact should be extended for less than an indefinite period at this point.

"The future of the treaty should be meticulously intertwined with the periodic examination of progress" in such areas, he said.

The United States appears, however, to be successfully building a coalition of nations to win a permanent treaty extension free of any major new demands on the nuclear powers, (see page 2)

"Certain nuclear weapon states... not only rendered, generously, materials and know-how to Israel," Mr. Velayati said. "But also

turned a blind eye to Israel's production and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction, tacitly exempting it... from the NPT."

Iran's president said his country would back the renewal of the NPT but under certain conditions, Interfax news agency reported.

Tehran was prepared to support the extension of NPT but "will set certain conditions when the time comes to sign the document," said President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani at the end of a two-day official visit to the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

He did not say what the conditions would be.

Tehran's nuclear programme has been questioned in recent weeks following Russia's decision to sell a nuclear reactor to Iran, and China's expressed intention to build two more in the country.

The United States has stepped up pressure on Moscow and Beijing to reject the multi-million dollar deals.

Washington has lobbied hard for an indefinite extension of the NPT after presenting the U.S. position in a speech to the conference Wednesday. Vice President Al Gore targeted some Third World countries, listed as undecided, for some high-level persuasion at a private lunch.

Singapore was among them, and on Thursday Singapore diplomat Viji Menon announced her nation's support for indefinite extension.

"The treaty could and should be strengthened," she told the conference. "We are not convinced, however, that giving it a limited lifespan is the best way to do it."

Arms control experts say the conference is leaning towards indefinite extension.

Denktash faces challenge to his 30-year leadership

NICOSIA (AFP) — Veteran Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash faces a challenge from his former ally Derwish Eroglu in run-off elections on Saturday in the breakaway northern republic of divided Cyprus.

Mr. Denkash fell short of a clear majority in a seven-way contest in a first round of presidential elections last Saturday, winning 40.0 per cent of the vote against 24.2 per cent for Mr. Eroglu, a fellow right-winger.

He now faces the first serious challenge to his leadership of the community since violence broke out between Greeks and the majority Greek-Cypriots in 1963, three years after the island gained independence from Britain.

The two main left-wing leaders who contested the first round, Ozker Ozgur who scored 19 per cent and Mustafa Akinci 14 per cent, have refused to back either Mr. Denkash or Mr. Eroglu and left their supporters free to vote as they want.

A fringe candidate, Alpaz Dulduran, has called for a boycott.

If the left-wing vote stays away, cutting the turnout from the 113,000 electorate to below the 85 per cent of the first round, Mr. Denkash would benefit because of his 15,000-vote lead over Mr. Eroglu, political analysts said.

Mr. Denkash, a 71-year-old British-educated lawyer running for his third five-year term in office, said the result showed the Turkish-Cypriots wanted to keep their long-time leader.

"The Turkish-Cypriot people do not want to replace their advocate with another. The people want this advocate to pursue his mission," he said. "Myself, I am ready for this mission and know the difficulties very well."

Algerian politician wounded

ALGIERS (AFP) — A member of Algeria's transitional legislative assembly was seriously injured Friday in an attack in Algiers by unidentified gunmen, security forces said.

Areski Oukid, 71, was rushed to hospital after the attack in a commercial area of the city.

He is a member of the National Transition Council (NTC), a hand-picked assembly set up after the secular, military-backed government cancelled elections three years ago which Islamic fundamentalists were poised to win.

Security forces said it was a "terrorist attack," the term normally used to designate the work of armed Islamic groups, although they did not give further details.

Three NTC members have been killed since it was set up last year. Extremist groups had said they were "usurpers" and were thus prime targets for attack.

The 175-strong NTC is boycotted by most opposition parties.

The shooting came as the Arab-language daily Al Hayat reported Friday that an army general and two colonels had been killed by armed groups in separate attacks.

The paper, quoting sources close to the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), said the officers were killed Wednesday.

If confirmed, it would be the first time an army general has been killed by extremists in what the paper said appeared to be a coordinated spate of attacks on military officers.

COLUMN 8

Diana on Hong Kong fund-raiser swing

HONG KONG (AFP) — Britain's Princess Diana, the estranged wife of Prince Charles, arrived in Hong Kong Friday for a private weekend visit in support of charity. Governor Chris Patten greeted the Princess of Wales at the British colony's airport before she headed off to her first function, a gala fund-raising dinner for a leprosy mission in China. On Saturday she will attend a cancer-society luncheon, followed Sunday by a tour of a drug rehabilitation centre and, before departure for London, an exclusive dinner with Mr. Patten and about 20 guests.

Mother Teresa opens a floating clinic

DHAKA (AP) — Mother Teresa has launched a floating hospital on a barge which was discarded as a scrap in France. "Love each other and pray together for peace," said Mother Teresa as she declared open the 38.5 metre long and five metre wide hospital in River Sitalakshi, 16 kilometres (10 miles) off Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. The ship was steered from a French town by social workers under the sponsorship of the Bangladesh Rotary Club. The barge survived the buffeting waves of the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal for three and a half months to reach Bangladesh. Named Friendship Hospital, it is fitted with equipment for treatment of common diseases, said a doctor.

Diana's brother and wife to separate — paper

LONDON (R) — Princess Diana's brother Charles Spencer is to separate from his wife Victoria who is in a clinic battling the eating disorder bulimia, the tabloid Sun newspaper reported Friday. "Lord and Lady Spencer will live separately for the foreseeable future. They have no current plans for divorce," a spokesman for the 30-year-old Earl told the paper. It said Earl Spencer would provide a house on his Althorp estate for his wife and they had agreed to give each other open access to their three young daughters and baby son. Earl Spencer said earlier this month that his 29-year-old wife, a former model, was receiving treatment at an exclusive clinic. "My wife would be happy for me to tell you that she has had a problem with addictions and eating disorders for 10 years now, and this has been the first chance I have had to persuade her to have proper treatment," he said. He said Lady Spencer had "serious psychological problems." "My main concern is to keep her there because that is where she is going to get the best treatment that she can," Earl Spencer complained to Britain's media watchdog, the press complaints commission, saying intrusive tabloids had "ripped the heart out of the story" and set back his wife's treatment.

Coffee, tea lower some cancer risks — study

STOCKHOLM (R) — Coffee drinkers who consume six or more cups daily may reduce their chances of cancer of the colon, according to a Swedish medical study. Those who prefer tea also benefit, the study said. Drinking more than two cups a day reduced the incidence of rectal cancer. "Coffee consumption appears to be protective against colon cancer and tea against rectal tumors," the report entitled "coffee, tea, tobacco, and cancer of the large bowel" stated. Research in Stockholm under the approval of Karolinska Hospital over a two-year period also showed smoking did not affect the incidence of cancers studied. "In summary, our findings indicate that cigarette smoking, even long-term, does not have a substantial association with the risk of colorectal cancer," it added. Swedes avoid coffee drinkers, and a substantial number consume more than six cups daily, the report said.